Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur

The North American Review

VOLUME 235 JUNE, 1933 NUMBER 6

Apéritif

One Millennium or Another

IT MAY be that the *Times*, with all its generosity in the way of reading matter, has been so wholly occupied by Washington, London, Paris and Geneva lately that its representatives have had no chance to report such things, but this student of newspapers, at least, has been unable to find a single prophecy of the end of the world in many months. When you consider that these prophecies are generally frequent and of a nature to entertain the sophisticated, it seems pity enough; but when you consider further that at about this time a thousand years ago fanatics were laying the groundwork which in the year 999 precipitated upon the prediction of the Apocalypse an invasion of the Holy Land so great that it was "compared to a desolating army," according to Dr. Charles Mackay, it seems a downright dereliction of duty, a waste of unlimited technological leisure.

Mr. Hoover, of course, has foreseen an outcropping of grass in Wall Street, and he is to be complimented upon a tendency of direness in his forward-looking, but how is that to be compared with Doomsday? The fact that nothing much but disillusion was reaped at the first millennium should be no proof to believers in the free operation of the stock market that nothing will at the second. There could, after all, have been a typographical error.

Still, there is a certain dubiousness in the air. Senator Reed has been the spokesman for an element which holds little faith in the efficacy of control over inflation, and his only hope of remedy lay in the dissolution of Congress — a curious hope when you think of the powers vested in the Executive. The *Times*, again, has been having the utmost difficulty in adjusting its attitude toward an Administration which carries out an unsolicited promise to cut a billion dollars from the budget on one hand, and takes the bit out of the inflationists' teeth on the other. Even that limpid soul, Walter Lippmann, has been known one day vigorously to defend the note issue provision of the inflation bill, and then back down the next. One can, indeed, "look peripatetically on this scene."

Copyright, 1933, by North American Review Corporation. All rights reserved.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For the less gifted, or positioned, than these three, however, the dubiousness takes on a greater intensity. To see one's way through the maze of cause, effect and relation inherent in an English Equalization Fund, its agreement with the French and their combined effect on the dollar (gold, paper or imaginable) is no task for weaker minds. They flinch. And even the much better than average minds have a marked tendency to keep in the safe dugout of cautious criticism; John Chamberlain, for instance, has been doing a series of articles on the remedies suggested by various people in which rays of hope are as hard to find as the proverbial needle in the haystack.

In connection with the thirty-hour week bill, which the A. F. of L. has advocated for more than a year, Mr. William Green is heard voicing the bitterest objections to Secretary Perkins's minimum wage amendment. A large mass of citizens is bewildered by this attitude — trade unionism's purpose is to increase wages, or keep them from falling: why shouldn't labor organizations welcome legislation helping the whole body of labor to achieve a decent income? The answer is, of course, that labor organizations must ever advocate what will not lose their leaders' jobs. But there remains a superficial look of plausibility in the argument that a legalized minimum wage will inevitably become an actual maximum wage, and that all wage earners will have a level wage, regardless of ability. Its absurdity lies in the fact that there is always a "going wage" for labor of a certain kind in a certain locality, and that nevertheless the more skilled workers earn and receive income greater than that. Industrial engineers have already gone a long way in ascertaining by scientific methods the relative values of different kinds of work, and eventually their findings must be the basis for pay rates — not political pressure from labor groups or lack of it. That is, if we are to have any decently organized sort of society.

But that, too, is a very confusing question. Will the liberalism of the New Deal achieve any lasting results, or will it fail and be succeeded by the still active and resentful proponents of rugged individualism, protective tariffs, keeping the Government out of business and all the other claptrap?

Why in all this struggle and contention do people fail to see Doomsday coming on? Even in the worried discussion over where and when the next (inevitable) war will break out the most that is conjectured as a result of it is the breakdown of civilization. There are pictured shrapnel with a spread of a hundred yards, gas bombs capable of annihilating cities, explosives powerful enough to destroy the strongest fortifications as easily as a pup tent, chemicals which would melt stone like butter. But no one imagines that the earth will be torn apart, that not even a few uncultured savages will remain upon it.

From all this there would appear to be room for a new lobby at Washington, perhaps one named after a fictional creation of Mr. Edwin Balmer — the League of the Last Days. Its duties would be to croak incessantly that everything was going to the dogs, to argue for the complete relinquishment of worldly pursuits, such as business, banking, industry,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

farming and legislation, not to mention diplomacy. A law [*sic!*] would be advocated requiring all people to sell their possessions and journey with the proceeds to Jerusalem, as good Christians did in 999: a law whose enactment would depress all values to the vanishing point, leaving no economic system for any one to argue about.

On the other hand, the present absence of such a lobby, or any apparent feeling of its need, may conceivably reflect the fact that people have been facing the worst — without, perhaps, altogether thorough understanding — and have decided that it is, after all, remediable. There is even a hint of their belief that remedies are already being found and applied. Seven-million-share days on the stock market are none too good criteria, but an expansion of steel production from fifteen to twenty-nine per cent in a month means something, and the outcome of the World Conference for the first time begins to appear somewhat promising. Besides, 2000 is known to be a leap-year. We may have to postpone that journey until 3000.

Page Mr. Chesterton

For the cynical it would be a rare event if the Scottsboro trial and Judge Lowell of Massachusetts succeeded in influencing Southern courts to include in their juries a fair proportion of Negroes, as Mr. Virginius Dabney has hinted recently might be the case. The Supreme Court would have precedent for not rousing Southern opinion to white heat by opposing Judge Lowell, and there is little enough possibility that the Fourteenth Amendment will be suddenly enforced. But voluntary action to avert such embarrassing arguments as Mr. Leibowitz, defense attorney for the Scottsboro boys, presented seems to be expected, and to have that brought on the South by a combination of Communist organization and Republican judge has its funny side.

In fact, it ranks a close second to the present delicate negotiations apparently going on between Herr Hitler's Government and Moscow. As George Gerhard points out in another part of this magazine, it is economically impossible for Germany to continue long in a wholly nationalistic policy: too much of her life depends on foreign trade, and a very large part of her recent foreign trade has concerned that devils' land to the east which harbors so many brothers of the enemies of the "national rebirth." There are curious accounts of Soviet representatives being admitted in the concentration camps of German Communists to prove what kind treatment the latter are receiving at the hands of the Nazis; other indications, too, crop up that presage a future relationship between the swastika and the hammer and sickle not unlike that Biblical one between the lion and the lamb. Of course, the Bible is on the Soviet *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, but in present-day Germany it is evidently to be used in the service of the Nazi Government, and in that just possibly may be the explanation.

Mr. Keynes on Construction

It becomes increasingly clear, not only to the humanitarians among our economic thinkers and dilet-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tantes but to the more hard-boiled as well, that a general forcing of construction will be needed for full recovery. But the cost of such a forcing, having, as it apparently does, to come out of the Federal pocketbook, looks very formidable to any taxpayer who has had the miserable experience of totting up his income for 1932, and therefore the project engenders misgiving.

Consequently, a new pamphlet by John Maynard Keynes should be received here with interest (*The Means to Prosperity*, Harcourt, Brace and Company). In this Mr. Keynes attempts to show with some exactness how beneficial large expenditures of this kind would be to the English Exchequer or to our own Treasury, and how, if accompanied by a pooling of international gold resources to help raise and stabilize the world price level and to minimize the central banks' fear of raids on their gold stocks, they would prove the quickest way back from famine. His argument is to the effect that national income would thus be expanded, not only directly through wages, salaries and purchases of materials for particular construction projects, but also indirectly through increased purchasing in other fields made possible by the payment of those wages, salaries and bills for materials. He has a formula by which he calculates that with each expenditure of £100 English national income would be increased £200, and further, that out of each £100 so expended £53 would go back to the Exchequer through increased returns on existing taxes. Because the United States is both less dependent on foreign trade than England and without her dole, we should enjoy even greater advantages from such a policy.

If our various governments considered further the great drop in price of both labor costs and materials, together with this return in taxes of money spent on construction, it might be harder to dissuade them from extravagant projects than it has been to persuade them on sensible ones. A piece of work that could be done today for $100 and which, under these circumstances, should return $53 or more to government coffers, later on may very well cost $150 — so that present economizing may cost the taxpayer money in the end.

At any rate, light on this subject appears to be coming out from under its basket in Washington. Doomsday is not yet. W. A. D.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A New Deal in the Pacific

By Hamilton Butler

Who advocates a return to our "Asia-for-Asiatics" policy of forty years ago as the only way to promote both Oriental and American interests

At a time when tremendous forces, which can not fail vitally to affect the future of this nation, are taking shape in the Far East, we find ourselves at odds with two of the three powers and distrusted by the third, which, with the United States, are able, if they but coöperate, to make their fiat the law in the North Pacific basin.

The Soviet Union has given back snub for snub. Japan continues its reorganization of Manchuria undeterred by the State Department's attempt to fight fate with phrases. China can not conceal its impatience with a Government that talks so big and does so little. As a result of our recent meddling in Asiatic affairs, American prestige stands today, among the peoples directly affected by our uncertain diplomacy, at "a new all-time low."

The danger inherent in this state of affairs ought to be plainly visible to any American who is not congenitally condemned to take an exclusively immediate view of world events. Asia is in active revolt against the West. Whether or not we escape gracefully from the greatest catastrophe that diplomatic ineptitude has ever conjured up for a modern nation will depend on the amount of vision and courage that can be summoned, from now on, to the direction of American policy in the Orient.

The fundamental defect of our present policy in the Far East is that we approach Asia and Asiatic questions through Europe and European formulas. The State Department in Washington has become a partisan meddler in the internal affairs of Asia, after the fashion of the predatory chancelleries of the Old World. All the advantages that geographical position and political traditions gave us, as a logical mediator between the Old World of Europe and the new world that is fast emerging from the ancient civilizations of Asia, were scrapped when we abandoned our early policy of dealing directly with our Pacific neighbors and allied ourselves with the leading powers of Europe in a common policy in China.

Although Secretary Stimson's belligerent pacifism has made a bad

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

matter very much worse, attempting to hold him solely responsible for our predicament in the Far East is dangerous, as well as historically indefensible: for, if we are to extricate ourselves, with honor, we have got to admit that we have been traveling in the wrong direction for more than thirty years — and make a complete *volte face*. The initial mistake of bracketing the United States with Europe in its approach to the Far East was committed by John Hay in 1898–99. The only original contribution of the Stimson-Hoover régime to our discomfiture in the Orient was its insistence that Japan conform its external policy to a doctrine which the more powerful nations of the West have never respected in the past and have no intention of respecting in the future, where their own self-interest is vitally affected. Colonel Stimson's obstinate refusal to recognize realities rendered a dull animosity acute and threw the issue of war or peace with Japan into delicate balance with that disciplined nation's self-control.

THE United States got off to a good start in the Far East. A century and a half ago Americans were not imperialistically minded. They had at home more land than they knew, at the time, what to do with. Consequently they sought in China neither colonies nor naval bases, as the more forward European nations were doing. They had no opium to peddle. They fought no wars. They seized no territory. All they wanted was to trade — except their missionaries, who wished to proselyte. The Chinese, another trading people, were quick to discover that they had nothing to fear politically from ships that came only to buy and sell. The foundation of a mutually profitable relationship was thus early laid. American business flourished, American prestige was high, American advice was sought. When he resigned in 1867 as American Minister to China, Anson Burlingame was invited by the Chinese Government to head the first general mission it had ever sent to the treaty powers.

A similarly helpful relationship developed with Japan, as well as with Chosen, when those countries were reopened to the world by American enterprise. Although much has happened in the past thirty years to mar the record, Japanese statesmen and publicists still allude, with grateful acknowledgment, to the early assistance received by their country from Americans and the American Government. The United States was the first treaty power to agree formally to tariff autonomy for Japan and thus — although this provision of the treaty of 1878 was contingent upon the other interested powers taking similar action — afforded the Japanese the incentive and encouragement to work for the complete abolition of extraterritoriality.

As long as this hands-across-the-Pacific policy was pursued, Americans were regarded by their neighbors in the Far East as *sui generis*, a nation distinct from Europe, with New World aspirations instead of Old World ambitions, a coöperative member of a group of peoples surrounding a common ocean that belonged peculiarly to them. All that went by the boards when John

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hay returned from London to Washington in 1898, with the Philippines and the Open Door in his portfolio and in his brain the dream of keeping up with the Joneses of Europe in a scramble for "rights" and privileges in the Orient. Our Pacific neighbors could not be blamed for beginning to wonder if, after all, Americans and Europeans were so very different. They have since had abundant reason to change their first opinions of this country and its international ethics.

The retention of the Philippines, at Great Britain's request, was notice to the world that, while we objected to the extension of the European system to any part of the American continents, we intended to extend the American system to other parts of the globe, where we liked and when we liked. The Open Door policy in China, about which more nonsense has been talked and written than about any other factor in American foreign policy, with the single exception of the Monroe Doctrine, was American neither in conception nor in its development. Secretary Sherman had previously rejected it, when the British Government first tried to put it over on the United States. The purpose of the Open Door policy was to protect British trade supremacy in China. The effect of Secretary Hay's espousal of it was to give American recognition to the principle of European spheres of interest in China, where America had no such sphere, and to entangle this country with Europe in a politico-economic protectorate over China. The Open Door policy opened nothing that was not already open and has prevented nothing from being closed, where any other country has been determined to close it. China was not saved from dismemberment by it. American trade with China has not been increased by it.

The manner in which Secretary Hay went about obtaining the adherence of other nations to the principle of the Open Door was significant of the new orientation of American policy in the Far East. The powers he first approached were Great Britain, a pardonable courtesy to the parent of his adopted child, Germany, France and Russia. Only after that did he ask Japan, whose interest in the vast potential market of China far exceeded that of any European country, to join the party. And he overlooked China, which was both the subject and object of the proposed agreement, altogether! The Chinese Minister in Washington had to go down to the State Department to find out what all the rumors of an international understanding respecting *his* country were about. The affront thus given to Asia did not pass unnoticed. A single bit of irony relieved the dull picture. The Open Door agreement confirmed, and by implication justified, Japan's claim to a sphere of interest in the Chinese province of Fukien, where Secretary Hay wished to obtain a naval station for the United States — and found his ambition thwarted.

The policy of playing with Europe against Asia, thus inaugurated, was the beginning of a series of entanglements for the United States, which has continued down to the present day. At the Washington Conference we were still more tightly sewed up with the European countries having

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

colonies in the Far East. The outlook for early and graceful disentanglement has not been brightened by Secretary Stimson's association of the United States with the League of Nations in an effort to influence Asiatic destinies by obstructing Japan's attempt to bring order out of chaos in a part of China in which geographical propinquity and economic necessity give the Japanese a peculiar and vital interest.

Among the mischievous consequences of this departure from early American policy has been an increasing disposition to take sides in Asia and play off one party against another, where we are not directly or immediately concerned. After the battle of Mukden and the destruction of the Russian Baltic fleet in the Sea of Japan, when it became clear that Japan had won its war with Russia, Theodore Roosevelt, who up to that time had hoped for and expected a draw in Manchuria, stepped in to prevent Japan from capitalizing its victory either in the field or at Portsmouth, where he used all his influence to prevent Japan from obtaining from Russia an indemnity to cover the cost of recovering Manchuria for China. The Taft-Knox régime followed this lead, with its "dollar diplomacy" and a specific scheme for the internationalization of the railways in Manchuria, which would have left Japan with only a minority voice in the development of a territory strategically and economically "cognate" to it. The various consortiums in which American bankers have participated still more recently, with the approval of the Government in Washington, are merely links in the chain by which the United States has been bound to the principal European countries in a financial protectorate of China. Are the Japanese altogether without justification in interpreting Colonel Stimson's encouragement of Chinese opposition to the pacification of Manchuria, as only another manifestation of a deliberate policy on the part of this country to block their expansion in Asia — or in resenting it as deeply as we should resent a similar attempt by Japan to interfere with the process by which American paramountcy in the Caribbean is maintained?

The effect of this intimate meddling in the Far East has been to alienate the good will of Japan, without bringing about any compensatory enhancement of Chinese affection for us. The Chinese have their own reasons for not loving the United States as passionately as they once pretended to. The fact is too widely ignored by Americans generally that the real issue between the East and the West is race — and the Chinese are just as race-conscious as we are. They might have become reconciled to their exclusion from this country if Americans had refrained from interfering in China; but, as it is, they resent our aggressiveness in the Far East quite as much as the Japanese do. At the moment they are trying to use the United States as a cat's-paw against Japan. As soon as they get their nationalist machine in working order they will do more than pass toothless resolutions denouncing the "unequal treaties" upon which our "rights" within their borders rest. The Chinese are a practical people. They judge others by acts rather

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than by professions. Our alliance with Europe, with respect to the Far East, was an invitation to them to boot us out of their country, when they boot Europe out. When they do that, we shall not receive as much as a "thank you" for all the cable tolls we have recently spent in their behalf.

A COURSE of action so frankly inviting reprisals by our neighbors in Asia could be justified only by results that outweighed the risks so clearly involved in it. As a matter of fact it has failed completely to achieve the objects which this country has been popularly supposed to be seeking in the Far East.

American policy in the Orient has been described as "a policy of righteousness tempered by self-interest." At times it has had that appearance. At other times it has looked more like a policy of self-interest veiled in cant and hypocrisy. As a general thing, what it has aimed to do has been to maintain peace in and about the Pacific, to promote the welfare of the Chinese people and to obtain for Americans a fair share of the commercial favors China has to distribute.

Glance at the results of this noble experiment in the field of foreign affairs.

China is still rent by the civil wars that came in with the Republic upon which the Government in Washington was the first to bestow the blessing of formal recognition. The moral encouragement given by the Stimson-Hoover régime to Chinese warlords to keep the fires of disorder burning in Manchuria has contributed to bringing China and Japan to open hostilities, when all interests concerned would have been far better served by encouraging China to accept the pacification of that bandit-infested area by Japan, as a friendly act of vicarious enforcement. The probability is strong that if the United States and the League of Nations had minded their own business, Japan and China would long since have come to a satisfactory understanding, along lines familiar to and acceptable by Asiatic peoples. American jingoism has been excited by Washington's gestures to a point where a rupture with Japan lurks just around the corner.

Americans generally have a deep and deserved regard for the Chinese people. The existence of this feeling explains why it has been so easy for successive administrations in Washington to obtain popular applause for "dollar diplomacy" or any other adventure in the Far East, which they could advertise as a sure cure for China's political or economic ailments. The condition of the patient before taking their nostrums has been drawn for consumption in this country, with the horrible details outlined in the deepest dyes. The condition of the patient after taking them is not so widely advertised. You must go to China itself for that.

At the time of the disastrous floods of 1931, a well-informed Shanghai publication, *The Far Eastern Review*, said of conditions in that distressed and bedeviled land:

> There is no money in China for famine or flood relief. Every dollar that can be squeezed from the people in taxes or through confiscation of property and wealth goes to maintain the vampire armies sucking the last drop of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the people's blood. The money that might be employed for the relief of humanity can not be diverted from the purchase of arms and ammunition. The maintenance of law and order, the first duty of organized governments, is subordinated to the perpetuation of military rule. Over 5,000,000 armed men are living upon the impoverished people. Three million men are incorporated in the 288 divisions that make up the provincial armies. Nearly one million comprise the army of Chiang K'ai-shek, the backbone of the National Government. The Manchurian armies number at least 500,000, Szechuan has over 300,000, Kwangsi and Kwangtung another 200,000. God alone knows just how many men are carrying a rifle in China. The bandits, Communists and independent armies number more than two million.

Government in China does not represent the people. At the present time it is in the hands of a half dozen or more racketeering gangs, who are making hay for themselves while the sun shines from Washington upon them. They have made of the map of their country a political jigsaw puzzle which the most ingenious champion of "administrative integrity" finds it impossible to piece together. The warlords, who have been keeping China in turmoil for more than a decade now and are still going strong, are naturally agreeable to the policy of giving China all the time they need to work out its destiny for it. *They* do not have to pay for the obstacles put in the way of the only country, Japan, which has had the courage to attempt to give Manchuria, what all China sadly needs, a respectable government, whereunder peace and order may prevail and the Chinese people may have an opportunity to translate their industry and thrift into happiness and contentment. The tragedy of American failure in the Far East is that China's teeming millions have to pay for it — with their hard earnings and, too often, with their lives.

American commercial interests in China and the interests of the Chinese people, as distinguished from their native exploiters, are closely parallel. "A thoroughly modernized Asia will offer," says Julean H. Arnold, American Commercial Attaché in Peiping, "an opportunity in international trade probably surpassing that yet presented by any other section of the earth during all of human history." The door to that opportunity has not yet been thrown open. Chinese conservatism has had its back to it from the beginning. Since the revolution of 1911–12 civil war and anti-foreignism have taken up the work of obstruction. Wu T'ing-fang once remarked that if an inch were added to every Chinese shirt tail, all the cotton mills in the world would be kept occupied for a year supplying the increased demand for piece goods. Conditions of disorder have shortened China's shirt tail instead of lengthening it. Commerce does not thrive on chaos.

A well-ordered and progressive China would also present the most extensive field for the self-liquidating investment of foreign capital to be found anywhere in the world today. The lack of adequate transportation handicaps efforts toward unifying the country politically and takes a tremendous toll of life in times of flood and famine, when millions die in the midst of a plenty that can not be got to them. China is about one-third larger than continental United States and has 17,000 miles of railway (if Manchuria's 5,000 miles are included). The United States has

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

250,000 miles. The construction of an adequate railway system, the development of motor highways and the release of the country's vast mineral wealth would absorb all the surplus capital Americans are likely to have to invest abroad for some time to come. China could put $10,000,000,000 to work tomorrow — and it can not borrow ten dollars! The political uncertainties ushered in by the revolution combine with the fact that China is already in default on bonds aggregating more than $100,000,000 to discourage foreign investors from risking their money in Chinese Government securities.

The restoration of China to a condition that would invite foreign capital to flow freely into it would ease the burden of internal taxation that is being borne by the present generation of Chinese, would promote international trade to the profit of all concerned and would unlock the natural resources China has in abundance and which might be made the means of turning the Chinese from a race of beggars for outside aid into a wealthy, self-supporting and self-reliant people. Japan realizes that; yet, when it takes definite measures to straighten things out in China, all it gets from this country is abuse. A fear seems to be prevalent among otherwise intelligent Americans that where Japan treads, American trade will wither like grass under the hoof-beats of Attila. Consider these facts:

After having traded with China for almost a century and a half, we did with that populous country in the peak year of 1929 a total business of $291,000,000. That works out to about sixty-five cents per capita of 450,000,000 Chinese. After having traded with Japan for about three-quarters of a century, we did with that far less populous country in the same year a business worth $690,000,000. That was equivalent to more than ten dollars per capita of 65,000,000 Japanese. If China had been a province of Japan, if American trade with it had been subjected to the same tariffs and duties as applied to American trade with Japan itself, our trade with China's 450,000,000 in 1929 would have amounted to upwards of $4,500,000,000, which is considerably more than the value of our entire foreign trade in 1931. Take our exports alone. The Japanese bought American goods in 1929 to the value of four dollars for every mother's son of them: if the Chinese had done as much, we should have sold them products of American labor to the total value of $1,800,000,000. Actually, we sold them $124,000,000 worth. The difference between our trade with Japan and that with China is the difference between dealing with an energetic, alert and orderly nation and with a nation whose development is retarded and whose buying power is dissipated by self-seeking and unscrupulous political exploiters.

Americans and Chinese would both profit by our recognizing, what is patently true, that Japan is doing more to open China's door to a more extensive intercourse with the rest of the world than all of our diplomacy from John Hay down has succeeded in doing. A rational view of the Chino-Japanese situation is this: If we want China to become united and strong, as we say we do, Japan's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aggressive action will bring that about, if anything can. If Japan can maintain a model government in Manchukuo, at least a part of what was formerly China will enjoy prosperity, while the rest of that loosely-joined aggregation of provinces will have something to emulate. If Japan bankrupts itself in the attempt, we should worry. If 450,000,000 Chinese allow 65,000,000 Japanese to dominate them or any part of them, we must conclude that it is because they prefer foreign protection to exploitation by their own political freebooters. If the Chinese absorb the Japanese, as some of their spokesmen boast they have always done with races that have conquered them in the past, a new and improved ethnic type will be produced on the Asiatic mainland. The Chinese need nothing more urgently than an injection of *bushido*.

The truth of the matter is that Japan is merely attempting to abate in territory close to it a nuisance that we would not tolerate in any country to which considerations of our national defense could even remotely be attached. The "Yankees of the East" are only borrowing a leaf from the book from which the Yankees of the West took the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. They are forced by Secretary Stimson's vehement protests to the conclusion that there is one law of growth for the Western Hemisphere and another law of growth for the Eastern Hemisphere. Why there should be is not clear to them.

THE only way out of the dangerous and unprofitable situation into which we have been led in the Far East points directly back to the policy which, as a general rule, we followed down to the time when Secretary Hay went off on his imperialistic tangent. The essence of that policy, as General Grant stated it, was to encourage the development of a strong and independent Asia as a bulwark against European intrigues and aggressions. As recently as 1894 Secretary Gresham declared that the Chino-Japanese War "endangers no policy of the United States in Asia" and that "our attitude toward the belligerents is that of an impartial and friendly neutral desiring the welfare of both." Our troubles began when, five years later, John Hay made the United States a partisan meddler in Asiatic affairs.

As a result of the misconceived internationalism of the Stimson-Hoover Administration, we have become still more deeply involved with Europe in the Orient. A year ago Viscount Ishii, alarmed by Secretary Stimson's reckless rhetoric, warned the United States that a situation of the utmost gravity would arise if it ever "attempts to dominate the Asiatic continent and to prevent Japan from pacific and natural expansion in this part of the world." Colonel Stimson attempted that very thing. Still more recently Count Uchida has felt it necessary to declare that "any plan for erecting the edifice of peace in the Far East should be based upon the recognition that the constructive force of Japan is the mainstay of tranquillity in this part of the world." Although an American Ambassador to Japan had said exactly the same thing a decade before, a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reiteration of Japan's claim to paramountcy in its own part of the world, when made by Japan's spokesmen, was something that the Administration in Washington which had provoked it could not accept without complete loss of face.

A new Administration of a different political complexion and tradition, which entered Washington over the corpse of its predecessor's foreign, as well as domestic, policies, can return, if it will, to a rational approach to Far Eastern problems, without either losing face or placing unprecedented strain upon the doctrine of the sanctity of treaties. The Nine-Power Treaty of 1922 can not be seriously said to be appropriate to conditions in China, after the lapse of more than a decade. The Pact of Paris does not deprive Japan of its right under the law of nations to act in self-defense or to judge for itself what constitutes a threat to its national existence and what means are necessary to remove the menace. All that is necessary to brush away Secretary Stimson's sophistries and pave the way for a revival of our disinterested rôle in the Far East is to interpret those two documents as liberally, where China and Japan are concerned, as we should interpret them in this hemisphere, where our interests were vitally affected.

The reversal of the Stimson-Hoover policy of joining with Europe to meddle in Asia would be no more abrupt or radical a departure from the immediate past than was Cleveland's prompt withdrawal from the Senate of his predecessor's outrageous annexation treaty with Hawaii or Woodrow Wilson's discountenancing of his predecessor's support of American participation in an international consortium for the financial enslavement of China. Continuity of policy is a dangerous hobgoblin of small minds, where the policy involved has already led to unpleasantness and promises future disaster.

As a first step in recovering the confidence and good will of the Asiatic peoples with whom we share the North Pacific Ocean, we must recognize that they are entitled to the same freedom of action in Asia as we claim for ourselves in America and its adjacent waters. Collaterally, we must abandon the claim to privileges in their hemisphere which we deny them in ours.

The fact must be admitted in practice, as well as in theory, that the Chinese, Japanese and other advanced Asiatic peoples, whose ancestors were highly civilized when ours were still in the Bronze Age, are in no sense our inferiors. They are merely different. Admitting racial equality, which was rejected in theory at Versailles and in practice is still widely denied in Europe and America, does not mean that we invite the unrestricted immigration of peoples who do not fit into our scheme of things: all it means is that we can not fairly and logically both discriminate against other nations in our country and insist upon preferred treatment for ourselves in theirs.

The early relinquishment of extraterritorial privileges in China follows naturally from the preceding premise. Americans in China have no more moral claim to exemption from the processes of Chinese law

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than Chinese in this country have to exemption from American law. The whole system of extraterritoriality is an impertinent and unnecessary demonstration that might makes rights. The Chinese nationalists resent the extraterritorial qualification of that "sovereignty" of China about which so much has been heard in Washington recently. The Nanking Government has twice denounced the treaties which sanction it. We have ignored this action, as have our principal European allies. Germany, Austria, Soviet Russia and the other countries which no longer enjoy extrality, are doing very well without it. German trade with China has staged a post-war comeback unparalleled by any growth in American commerce with the Chinese. American taxpayers are mulcted and the Chinese people irritated by a fiction of international law that injures the latter without benefiting the former. Our relations with China and the Far East generally would be vastly improved by our taking an aggressive lead for the abolition of all restrictions on Chinese sovereignty and authority — and then holding the Chinese to strict accountability for their acts, as we do other organized peoples.

The Philippines should be abandoned at once. They have always been both an economic and a strategic liability to the United States. They were taken to please Great Britain and a handful of American imperialists. They should be given up to please a nation that has had thirty-five years in which to repent of what it sanctioned in haste and hysteria. And when we get out of the Philippines, we should get out all over. We can not afford to remain responsible for what another people may do on the other side of the world, after we have lost the power to control its acts. The supreme absurdity of our Philippine adventure is the proposal, which Congress reënacted over the Executive veto, that when and how we shall relinquish responsibility for the Islands shall be determined by a people whose capacity for self-government is still a matter of acrid debate in this country! Any joint agreement with other powers regarding the Philippines, after we withdraw from them, should be restricted to Japan, China and the Soviet Union. After driving one European country out of the Islands there is no good reason for inviting any other European country to participate in their protection. Our outright retirement from the Philippines would be proof of the sincerity of our subscription to the doctrine of Asia for the Asiatics, a gesture of confidence in our principal Pacific neighbors that would go far toward easing the tension created by the clamor of our big-navy people for a fleet strong enough to keep the Stars and Stripes floating over Corregidor.

The Soviet Union should be formally recognized. The State Department has carried on long enough the puerile pretense that it is not officially aware of the U. S. S. R.'s existence. We recognized the Soviet Union in fact in 1928, when we signed with it the Pact of Paris; we recognized it again in 1929, when Secretary Stimson communicated with it through Aristide Briand, with respect to the application of that famous pact to the squabble

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over the Chinese Eastern Railway. The Government in Moscow could not conceal its surprise at receiving word from another Government that did not know it existed! The establishment of normal diplomatic relations with Moscow would in no wise prejudice our claims upon the Soviet Government for the sums owing to American citizens or the American Government, which it so far has refused to admit constitute a charge against it. American labor would not suffer from it: for all our diplomatic snootiness has not prevented the Soviet Union from doing a larger business with the United States than with any other country in the world, with the single exception of Germany.

The idea that the formal recognition of the Soviet Union would invite Communism to overthrow our cherished institutions is an insult to our national intelligence. When this nation contained only about 4,000,000 people and was badly divided into an English party and a French party, when Jacobin clubs were springing up in its cities and towns and its streets echoed the strains of the *Carmagnole*, George Washington was not afraid to recognize the French Revolutionary Government and receive its agents, although in England and on the Continent the French terror inspired far more alarm than the Russian terror has. Germany, a close neighbor of the Soviet Union, with a population about half the size of ours and with 6,000,000 Communist voters in it, survives diplomatic and commercial relations with Moscow. We, with about 60,000 Communist voters in our midst, are only encouraging Communist propaganda by turning pale at the sight of a crossed hammer and sickle. Any effective and successful Pacific bloc can not be hoped for without the cordial coöperation of the Government controlling Siberia; and is it not rather too much to expect such coöperation, as long as we treat the Soviet Government as a bootlegger, with whom we are ready to deal in the alley but are ashamed to be seen speaking to in public? Why be so squeamish about Moscow, when we have taken to our diplomatic bosom the far less respectable Government in Nanking?

Above all the United States should be severed from the League of Nations and its provocative action in the Far East. The League of Nations is in both conception and purpose un-American. American internationalists had dreamed of a league of nations in which all nations would be equal before the law, a true parliament of man. The organization set up by the Treaty of Versailles was merely the old Concert of Europe under a new name, with the same old drivers holding the reins, a device to throw the mantle of pacifism over the enforcement of a punitive treaty. The efforts that have been made to get the United States bodily into the League have been merely a continuation of the efforts made at Versailles to involve this country in a pact guaranteeing France's security: we were thus to become coguarantor of a treaty the Senate rejected. Great Britain and France have engagements in the Far East, at variance with our interests, which shape their overt and covert policies. The smaller powers in the League are meddling in what

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

does not concern them in the hope of creating precedents in the Orient that later they may be able to invoke in Europe against their powerful and predatory neighbors. The United States can not too soon get its head out of the yoke Secretary Stimson thrust about it when he went into partnership with the League of Nations in connection with the Chino-Japanese misunderstanding. Our fate in the Pacific is too important to be dictated by a bunch of little countries who do less business with China and Japan in a year than we do in a week. We do not consult Japan or China when we have a bone to pick with Spain or Czechoslovakia: why should we take the latter into account when we have something to say to our neighbors across the Pacific?

THE unescapable alternative to thus recovering the good will of our neighbors in the Far East is worth examining. All Asia is in ferment. A billion people are in different stages of revolt against white dominance in their part of the world. They have a single objective: Asia for the Asiatics. A very brief excursion into history is sufficient to explain what it is all about.

When Columbus sailed from Spain in 1492 to discover a new world in America, virtually the entire white race was cooped up in the comparatively small continent of Europe. Within the short space of four and a half centuries the white race has brought the entire world under its more or less complete control. The spawn of Europe have occupied the Americas and parceled out Africa among themselves. They have populated Australia and the islands of the sea. They have made India a footstool. They rule Siberia. They enjoyed extraterritoriality in Japan for half a century — and still do in China, whose littoral from Kwangchouwan to Tientsin is dotted with their colonies, concessions and leased territories.

The savage aborigines of America and Africa could offer no effective resistance to this white invasion. They were annihilated or submerged. Asia was a different nut to crack: for there the white man found more than half the population of the earth, already highly civilized and frankly disposed to look down upon him as an upstart, a condescension which he has since given them little reason to alter. The one thing the Asiatics lacked and the white man possessed, which enabled him to work his will upon them, was gunpowder. All they needed to put him back in his place was to equal him in the application of modern science to the art of fighting. They have that now. The yellow race has always had a preponderance of manpower and it is rapidly overtaking the white race in the science of warfare. A day of reckoning is at hand, when the "foreign devils" that have so long disturbed the Far East will find themselves confronted with their own fire, which they have taught the Orient how to use.

America is so situated as to be able, if it will, to cushion the blow, when Asia rolls back the white invader and reasserts its right to be master in its own house. Although their stock stands today in the Far East at a low point, as the result of interference in other people's af-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fairs, Americans have a vast fund of good will, accumulated in the past, which they can fall back upon if they but have the courage and vision to approach Asia again, with the substantial evidences of sincerity already outlined. The extension of the regional principle to the Pacific can not fail to appeal to the other nations directly concerned, if it be undertaken on a basis of racial equality, as a rational means of settling Pacific questions, without the interposition of European countries that have been nibbling at the Orient for more than four centuries and still hold much of it in thrall. We owe nothing to Europe, while Europe owes us much that it will never repay. What we owe to ourselves is to escape from entanglements that will make it possible for Europe to put us in the middle when the shooting begins.

Asia is not looking for a world war. All it is seeking to do is to solve its own problems in its own way, which in the end it will do, whether it be this year or ten years or fifty years hence. Any extension of the present Chino-Japanese conflict beyond its natural theatre will have to be invited by this country or Europe or both. Japan is merely putting into effect, while we have been talking about it, General Grant's idea of a strong and independent Asia. Whether we are to make of that Asia friend or foe will depend upon the promptness with which the Government in Washington reverses itself and again sets its face to the west, where our future still lies.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Money at Home

By Upton Terrell

A Story

The head and shoulders of a man rose up in the pit of darkness between the tender and the mail coach, and the whites of eyes shone in the moonlight. The Billings express was leaving the Great Falls yards, moving at twenty miles an hour over the switches along the main line.

He climbed up beside me in the shelter of the coal bunker and sat trembling and rubbing a knee. Presently he held out a thin cold hand and said, "Call me Siggie."

That was enough to warn me that he hadn't been long a bum. But I had known it—by his clothes and the way he spoke. He wore army breeches and spiral leggins, a leather jacket and a fedora hat, and they were not very dirty. His accent was seldom heard on the Western roads. Two thoughts had come quickly: Jews were rarely tramps. And if Siggie had had much experience riding the blinds, he wouldn't have boarded the train when it was moving so fast over a series of switches. He had been slapped against the side of the mail coach when he caught hold of the ladder rungs, and he was badly frightened, if not hurt.

He stopped rubbing his knee and took out a package of cigarettes, lighted one and settled back against the bunker.

"I'll ask him for one later," I promised myself.

"This train is for Chicago?"

"I guess the sleepers go through," was my answer. "They hook them on a main line flyer at Billings for Minneapolis and Chicago."

"Then I will be on the ocean," he said in a tone of satisfaction.

"The what?" I laughed. He became a little excited and commenced to talk rapidly.

"Look, is it not Chicago on the ocean? I have been there and I ask a man what is the water by the train and he tells me it is the Atlantic Ocean. So I think: All this way I have come from New York and I have not yet got away from the ocean."

I asked him, then, trying not to laugh again, where he was going. He said New York.

"New York! You've got a long ride ahead of you."

He seemed unimpressed, unperturbed, only a little disappointed to learn that he could not ride the entire distance on the back of the same engine, once he got on a through train.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well, anyway it's better than paying a ticket." His lips turned down at the corners, he shrugged his shoulders, spread his hands and looked intently at me. "Eighty-nine dollars and seventy-six cents for a ticket! Coming out I pay it. Going back, I should pay it again when I can ride for nothing."

That made me laugh, too; but I was most amused by his manner of reasoning. "With me," I said, "it isn't a question of whether I should pay it, but whether I could pay it. I'm going only to Billings, but the fact that I can beat my way is not the reason I don't buy a ticket and ride on the cushions."

He seemed astonished. "Well, don't you have no money?"

"No," I told him sarcastically. "Do you?"

He sniffed. "Certainly. I got six hundred dollars. Maybe more. Who knows?"

"Hell." He understood that I not only did not believe him, but that I was angry. His statement constituted an insult to my experience. I knew very well that no one with six hundred dollars rode on the blinds.

He smiled a little, as if he were somewhat entertained by my incredulity, and became a little arrogant. "You think I am a liar. All right, look. Take a good look."

He held open a wallet filled with paper bills.

I only nodded and turned away so that he should not see the extent of my consternation. I was utterly confused by the very thought of so much money in the possession of a man on the back of an engine.

"Now." He returned the wallet to his pocket with a careless motion.

"Where did you get that roll?" I asked, making an effort to speak casually.

But he must have caught a note of suspicion in my voice, for he said very quickly, "No, I did not steal it. . . . Well, wouldn't you like to know? But I will tell you. I don't lie. I make it. All summer I am a bellman in Glacier Park. So, now what do you think?"

"If you really want to know," I said, "I think you're crazy."

"Yes?"

"Yes. If you show that money very much on the road, some stiff will knock you on the head and take it away from you. Why didn't you send it to New York by money order?"

He looked at me with contempt. "You wouldn't understand — a bum." Then he held up a hand quickly to check me. "Don't get mad. Maybe I am wrong, see." That expression of fathomless sorrow one may see only on the face of a Jew who bears the weight of all the centuries of tragedy his race has known appeared on his face. He was apologetic.

"It's this way. Now I have worked all summer and not a penny do I spend. So I tell mamma when I come home I bring enough money so she should not worry for a long time. Then she is willing I should go so far to work." He tapped his chest and demanded, "What is it, a money order? Only a piece of paper with numbers on it. She won't know what it is she should do with it. A piece of paper. Now when I come home and I say, 'Look, mamma, here it is! I myself come with the money! See, I bring it, so now you

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should not worry.'" He drew a deep breath and looked away over the moonlit range-land. "I can hear how she will cry now, even so far away. Money brought by me, her boy. I ask you, don't a mamma like that her boy bring home the money to make her happy? Money order — ach!"

We rode for some time without talking. The train was flying down grade. The tender swayed. Behind us, the coaches, a long lighted line, followed like the glowing tail of a winding serpent. Red sparks passed over our heads and fell like a rain of fire on the dark tops of the cars. The engine purred smoothly, then roared through its stack, and fell again into a rhythmic purring. Red light mingled in short flashes with the moonlight as the fireman opened and closed the fire door. I watched the empty country, the low hills and flat-topped benches — trying to keep out vicious thoughts. I felt strangely tense, on edge. My own pocket-book was empty. I had eaten my last meal far back in Shelby; there would be nothing more until I reached Livingston, and then only if I could earn it scrubbing a floor or washing dishes. Unless . . .

When he tapped me on the shoulder I started.

"What town is next we stop at?"

"Helena is the next big town." I went on to explain that Helena was a division point — glad to talk. The engine would be changed. The train would be there ten or fifteen minutes. It was rather difficult to get through. A railroad detective was on duty.

"You have been there?" he inquired apprehensively.

"Yes. I know the ropes."

"You will show me?"

I promised to guide him; and I told him about Livingston. It was even harder to get through on a passenger train than was Helena. There were several detectives stationed there, for it was the entrance to Yellowstone Park.

He lighted a cigarette, apparently satisfied that he had fallen into good hands.

The fireman came over the coal. He held a lantern in our faces, and turned away to look at the water in the tank. Then he knelt down before us, shielding himself from the cinders. "I don't care if you ride. But this engineer will make you pay. I've got to tell him you're back here. If you see another light comin' over, you'll know it's him." He grinned good-naturedly and disappeared over the coal.

Siggie looked at me questioningly.

"Maybe he won't come over," I said.

But in a few minutes the engineer jumped down before us. He came so quickly that we had no time to retreat to the top of the mail coach.

"Where you going?"

"Only to Helena," I replied. "We live there."

"Who do you know there?"

I sought an answer.

"Maybe my friends you wouldn't know if I told you," Siggie said. It was as good an answer as any.

"Hell, you don't live there. Come on, pay up. A dollar apiece if you want to ride."

"A dollar . . ." Siggie appeared dumbfounded.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We haven't any money," I said.

He turned back toward the coal. He had no time to argue. The train was moving at forty miles an hour without a pilot — only the fireman in the cab. "Pay or get off. We stop for water in a few minutes. Get off then."

When he had gone Siggie said something in Yiddish and looked at me in a queer way.

"I'll show you," I said.

The train stopped at a deserted tank station set in a vast empty moonlit prairie. We got off and walked back along the mail car.

"We'll ride the blinds. If we stay in this place we may wait for two days before another train stops."

"No, no," he said excitedly. "I can not stay."

We climbed up between two baggage coaches. I told him to take the forward wall. It was the most protected when the train was moving. We were obliged to stand on narrow ledges and hold to the hand rails. It was a dangerous way to ride. If one dozed and slipped . . . I warned him. He said he was not tired or sleepy.

"Button your coat over the bar."

"Never before have I rode in such a way."

I JUDGED that we were not more than an hour out of Helena. It was not a cold night. We would make it without suffering. He looked frightened when the train started and clung to the rail with both hands. We could not talk now, for the noise from the trucks was deafening. The wind whipped our clothes; the cinders rained down upon us.

When the train slowed down in the Helena yards we jumped off and I led the way out to a street. We had to walk half a dozen blocks to reach the south-bound yards and I thought it advisable to follow a lighted business thoroughfare. In the darker residential streets we might have come under the eyes of a suspicious policeman. I did not fear for myself. Arrest would only have delayed me; I would have spent a few hours in jail; in the morning I would have been told to beat it. But it might have gone hard with Siggie. The money would have caused him trouble. He would have had some explaining to do, and there was a good chance that he would have been charged with something or other and fined.

We passed several restaurants, but Siggie did not seem to notice them. I dismissed the thought of a cup of coffee. There would be plenty of time in Livingston, and I felt certain he would buy us both a square meal. A man with six hundred dollars . . .

He followed doggedly behind me as we made our way through the lines of freight cars in the south yards, stopping finally in the shadow of a freight shed.

"This is where she comes out," I told him. "Keep out of the headlight. As soon as the engine passes, we can get on. You'll have to be quick, because she'll pick up speed fast. I'll take the mail coach and you get on the tender. We don't want any mistakes."

He nodded that he understood. "I would not have found the way here without you. Lost I would have got."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He seemed grateful. I asked him if he had ever beaten his way before.

He shook his head. "You can tell that?"

"Well, you don't know much about it."

He stood looking off down the track toward the switch lights which dotted the yards like scattered jewels. Then he spoke deliberately. "A friend I meet tells me I can do it easy. On the blinds he comes himself to Glacier Park. Can not I do that, too, and have the money with mamma at home?"

"It's not as easy as it looks, is it?"

He answered me slowly, wearily. "It's very hard. Almost I wish sometimes I did not come."

We drew back against the freight house wall when the train came out of the yards. The forward blinds were empty. When the engine had passed, I told him to go ahead. He ran toward the tender. I stepped out and swung on to the mail coach. He reached for the hand rail and stumbled. But he kept his footing and ran on. The train was gathering speed. He caught hold on his second attempt, but instead of pulling himself up, he let the train lift him. He was slapped against the side of the car.

When I had climbed up on the tender, I found him rubbing his knee. His face had a pained look on it. I started to instruct him on how to flip a train, but he shook his head, appearing unappreciative, and I stopped. He took out his cigarettes again, and this time I asked him for one. For a moment he was silent. Then he broke a cigarette in two.

"I divide with you. See, I give you half of mine."

We had no more trouble from the trainmen on the trip to Livingston. The train stopped seldom. When the fireman came back, he ignored us. It was growing light by the time we reached Bozeman. The eastern sky was a pale gray; the moon had set leaving the high hills in dark shadow pierced with only the fading light of stars. The Bozeman Tunnel, a mile and a quarter long, was ahead. I showed him how to fix his handkerchief over his face after dipping it in the tank water. He seemed terrified and crawled to the side of the tender to look ahead.

"The train it stops in the tunnel?" he asked fearfully as he crawled back beside me.

"It won't stop. But don't forget where you are and stand up."

When we went into the dark entrance I stretched out. He lay beside me. Once as we roared on in the complete blackness he reached out and touched my arm. Near the end the smoke was suffocating; the heat from the engine was sickening. Then we shot out into the gray dawn again. I sat up and looked at him. His face was drawn and he was shaking.

The train traveled down into the valley of the Yellowstone at tremendous speed. It passed through the Livingston yards too fast for us to leave it. I told him to climb down on the step of the tender, and myself crossed to the mail coach. I knew of a level place just west of the depot, and when we reached it, I let go. I landed on my feet, and with my legs stiff before me I skidded along the cinders to a stop. He jumped a moment later, struck the ground on one foot and turned over. He fell

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hard, face downward, and rolled several feet. I helped him up.

"You'll kill yourself . . . " In that moment I felt a strong compassion for him. He was a fool. I pitied him. I believe he had a constant vision of his mamma's delighted and thankful face. He could hear her crying with joy, even so far away.

"I think I am killed," he gasped. "This bumming I can not do." He stood cringing, shaking, but apparently not seriously hurt.

"We've got some time here," I said when we had got off the railroad right of way. "They go over the train. But if I were you, I wouldn't try to make the same train out. Detectives ride on the tender to the end of the yards. I'm going to wait for a freight. They go fast down to Billings."

"When does the freight go?" He was trembling again, as if the mention of riding another train upset his nerves.

"There'll be one out some time this morning."

"I wait. There is a restaurant here?"

"Sure. Lots of them."

"I mean a good one."

"Several."

"You will show me?"

I took him along a street running from the depot to the main thoroughfare. When we turned the corner we came in front of the Yellowstone Café. "Good as any."

He gazed up at the sign. "I can get a good steak here?"

"I should think you could. Good enough when a man's so hungry."

"All right. Thank you. Good-bye." He turned abruptly in the door.

I stood still for a minute. Then I went back along the street to Railroad Avenue. A row of cheap cafés, hotels and saloons faced the tracks. I turned into the American Café.

When I had finished mopping the floor, the waiter served me with a bowl of oatmeal, a stack of wheat cakes and coffee. After I had eaten, I asked him for a cigarette. He gave me three.

I went outside. The first rays of the sun had touched the Bridger Range west of town. In the east the Crazy Mountains stood up as a purple barrier to the advancing golden light. I walked along Railroad Avenue until I had passed the eastbound yards, then I cut across to the tracks and sat down beside a pile of ties. Soon I fell asleep. When I awakened the sun was high. It was mid-morning.

I HEARD a road engine whistle. A freight was pulling out of the yards. When it came along I swung on to a ladder. The engineer opened the throttle, and the long line of refrigerator cars jerked and plunged ahead. I turned to climb to the top of the car when I saw Siggie running toward the train. He came out of a culvert and ran along the ballast. I waved frantically at him to stop, to go back. The train was going too fast to be caught by any one but an expert, and an expert would not have tried.

Either he did not see me or he paid no attention to my signals. Suddenly he jumped and clutched at a ladder. He caught it with one hand and was slapped against the side of the car with terrific force. His hand was torn loose and he went down between the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cars. Then as if he had been belched from the mouth of a cannon, he shot out. He rolled along the ballast, finally stopped and remained motionless in a crumpled heap.

I climbed down to the step below the ladder, crouched and jumped. When I hit the ground I did not try to stop myself. I kept my head down and my arms folded over my face. I turned over several times. When I sat up the earth was spinning. The train roared on; the caboose was far down the track by the time I had gathered my senses and started back to him.

He was conscious, but he could not move. He looked up at me pitifully, color gone from his eyes. His face was like chalk where it was not blood. I knelt down beside him, and then I saw that both his legs were mashed. I think he was too numb to feel pain, if such a thing is possible. But the look in his eyes was not one of pain. It was a look of fearful tragedy.

I needed only to call an undertaker. "I'll get a doctor," I said.

His lips stirred. I bent close to him. "Listen," I said, "what about your money? I'll do what you say with it."

I put my ear almost to his mouth to catch his words, but he died while trying to speak. I opened his coat and took out his wallet. There was only five dollars in it.

I examined it carefully, looking among some odd papers, two letters and a faded photograph of a stout girl. Then I came to a small slip of blue paper. It was a money order receipt for six hundred and fifty dollars. The stamp of the Livingston post-office was on the back of it.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frenchmen Look at America

By Alice Storms

Puzzled by the closer view of us they gained during and since the War, they are less able to understand our attitude toward debts and disarmament than we are theirs

Just outside my window a chestnut tree is straining every branch to burst into blossom before any of his less favored Paris relations. And why shouldn't he? Alone perhaps of all his fellows, he is safely shut away from the maelstrom of city streets; from smothering asphalt and strangling obnoxious gases. In his delicious unexpected oasis the sun turns round him from morning till it sets; cold winds never touch him. The most unreasonable chestnut tree could ask no more. Human requirements, too, are more than satisfied. What traveler would have the temerity to ask more of a great city than a chestnut tree, a diminutive garden, bounded on one side by a perfectly satisfactory Eighteenth Century façade, carved escutcheons, tawny lions with benignly folded paws, the delicate tracery of wrought iron at its best and tinted crinkly window panes in high windows? Nor is this all, for in the *grand salon* on the other side of that sun-baked façade the Marquis de La Fayette married the daughter of the Duke de Noailles, and there he lived — if indeed the intrepid young adventurer can be said to have lived anywhere in the hectic years when a Monarchy was dying, when two Republics were being born.

From somewhere out in the world — as much perhaps as a block away — the muffled trill of a traffic policeman's whistle recalls my reluctant attention to reality and four great piles of books and clippings and notes before me:

1. As others see us
2. Twentieth century applications of the Monroe Doctrine
3. Debts and reparations
4. Disarmament

It is a mystery to me why so many people have had so much to say on those subjects, and a greater mystery still why I of all people ever collected what they wrote and went out of my way to listen to a score of average Frenchmen besides.

As long as the countless millions of the earth — though they wear similar gloves and hats and shoes and use the same brand of soap and gasoline and sewing machines and ride in the same kind of automobiles

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

— can watch each other doing things differently, they will not understand each other. And they seem determined to get along without understanding, except under the stress of some great cause.

Though I have no hope of finding that cause, here I am about to defy my principles, because one of the four hundred-odd delegates to an international Astrologers' Congress now sitting over in the Latin Quarter has announced that all the late unpleasantnesses — "acts of God" and man alike — are as nothing to the approaching cataclysm which is to swallow up most of what we call the world — and bring back the fabled Atlantis to fulfil its destiny. So it is of the future astrologers, political economists and historians that I am thinking as I summarize just before the great engulfment the opinions of a part of the Twentieth Century world about its problems and its neighbors.

SINCE the days of Ulysses — Homer's not James Joyce's — travelers have more or less faithfully recounted their travels for the delectation of the stay-at-homes who have gloried in tales of one-eyed men and three-legged beasts inhabiting countries where trees wave their roots in the air. In the old days, stay-at-homes believed all the tales they were told; in 1933 they select from the avalanche of conflicting reports the one that fits in best with their own pet theory, and defend it from then on against all evidence as the one and only inalienable truth.

Fifty years ago, Irving, Hawthorne, Thackeray, Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Chateaubriand, de Toqueville and Sardou gave the French boy a glorious idea of an incredible America. Today, moving pictures and newspapers, travelers and Sinclair Lewis and the host of French discoverers of the United States offer to 40,000,000 Frenchmen a hodgepodge of impressions and explanations and apparently authentic information of a no less incredible America where Indians have given way before gangsters, and stern pioneers before scarcely admirable bankers.

"Until 1917," said a resentful voice, "you were a fabulously wealthy, utterly kind fairy godfather, who in every self-respecting play carried the key to happiness for everybody in his heart and in his wallet. *L'Oncle d'Amérique* smilingly saved widows and orphans from unspeakably cruel landlords on whom he would have wreaked mighty vengeance if he hadn't reformed them. He outwitted villains, beamed his blessing on reunited sweethearts, reconciled irate husbands and wives, protected budding geniuses — to be brief he waved a wand, commanded everybody to be happy and gave them the means to obey. He was always good-natured, kind, amusing, bad-mannered and altogether charming. We loved him.

"And now look at you! You fling in our faces your racketeers, your bank scandals, your universal speculation, your defiance of Prohibition, your implicit obedience to the dictum of red and green lights in a deserted street at midnight, your hardness toward the Negro you liberated in the name of humanity, your machines, your easy divorces, your slapstick comedies and your

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Presidential elections. Your prominent men disport themselves in our cities with actresses — we don't question their right to do as they please; in fact, kings, on duty and off, princes and our own prominent men have always done the same — but you *were* different and you have always scorned us for our 'lightness.' Do you wonder that we are puzzled and disillusioned and resentful? We long for the days when it was easy to understand cowboys and Indians and 'typical' Americans. Your 'drug stores' and skyscrapers and women's clubs; your religious fanatics, your Technocracy and your canned goods are too far beyond our ken. The length of your rivers, the size of your lakes and farms, the immensity of your country and of your conceptions, the height of your prosperity and the tragic depths of your despair are more incomprehensible than the dizzying figures of War debts, or lands where pygmies live."

"All your grievances are justifiable," interrupted another voice, "but you must surely admit that *our* 'typical American' has survived. He came across the ocean and raced into battle with a laugh and high reckless courage; he gave his money and his thought and his strength to relieve our suffering thousands; to rebuild our shattered towns and restore our ruined cathedrals and neglected castles. Unfortunately, beside these supermen and superwomen were smaller men and women whom we saw after the first rush of joy and gratitude was over. We grew curious about them; we wanted to know what they thought and how they lived — and the first thing we knew we realized that they weren't so different from ordinary mortals. In our great disappointment, we went to the other extreme — deliberately forgot the very real 'typical' American, and in a spirit of vengeance for lost illusions we lumped all Americans in one great unlovely mass. So sincere were we that we were often ridiculously surprised to come across our typical American — just as numerous as ever, but no longer alone. You must admit that your great influx of tourists when our poor franc was at its worst was not calculated to set us right, nor have your moving pictures and Sinclair Lewis been of much assistance. The few of us who have seen you at home know how charming and hospitable you are, and we regret that more often than we like to admit you are noisy and intolerant and bad-tempered as soon as you cross the Atlantic. There is no use talking, you don't put your best foot foremost in Europe."

"Some of us, too, who have gone over to see you live at home," chimed in another voice, "have failed to find your supermen. One of us went crusading like the knights of old in righteous indignation against the Machine. Like any well-behaved crusader, he refused to see the good beside the bad, and found no extenuating circumstances anywhere. Others of us have disapproved of your food, your drinks and your children. To ourselves we may admit that if we followed in your path, our children would be healthier, though their manners and their education might suffer. Others of us just can't reconcile your moral laws and puritanical principles with variety shows that make our poor Folies Bergère look like a child's picture book; with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yards and yards of moving picture kisses; with your stopped automobiles; your 'Kiss-Proof Rouge'; your young girls' freedom; your everlasting 'sex appeal,' for which there is no word in French. Such trivial things as fire axes and fire hoses and fire escapes in your 'absolutely fire-proof' hotels take on undue importance. We wonder why so many of your women gazing upon Europe from autocars have such longing in their eyes; wherein has your system failed to satisfy them? Everything and everybody, you see, have to be explained — and there are explanations for all tastes. Men like André Siegfried, Bernard Faÿ, André Maurois, Paul Morand, Firmin Roz, Henry Bérenger, Raymond Recouly, Henri de Kérilis, Philippe Soupault, General Taufflieb, René Puaux and Marcel Achard have brought to their explanations their own lucidity and experience and sense of justice — the true critical sense which points out the good and the bad and draws from each lessons that we would do well to learn. But countries and people and books and vital problems are like those ancient Spanish inns where the traveler found only what he had brought in his own knapsack — and I must say that many of us carried strange spectacles and lanterns across the sea. Some did not expect to be taken seriously when they set down distorted views of you: no one took them seriously when they mirrored French people in convex, concave or wavy mirrors! Others set out deliberately to prove some absurd contention, others to astonish and amuse their readers with tales of a madman's paradise, others still seem to have been patriotically bent on proving that Frenchmen aren't the only people in the world addicted to wine, women and song, though your wine was replaced by more potent concoctions. Whatever their motives, the results are amazing. Christopher Columbus never made any more startling discoveries than Georges Duhamel, Luc Durtain, Maurice Dekobra and Ferri Pisani. Even Baron Munchausen will have to look to his laurels.

"Had the old idea of you not been shattered already their tales would have amused and made no impression. As it is, their discoveries are a bonanza to the popular mind —particularly in the provinces. They replace very satisfactorily the land of one-eyed men, and bring the necessary breath of the marvelous into the tedium of stern, narrow, provincial existence. You smile? Caesar's appreciation of the Gauls still sticks after 2,000 years, doesn't it? Try living in a prudish, puritanical, provincial town for a while — among the people of the town, not in a foreign student colony. You will admit after a fortnight that you never imagined anything so devoid of physical, mental and moral relaxation. Be it in Grenoble or Toulouse or Bordeaux or Quimper or Nantes or Nancy, if the Frenchman is 'light' it is because he creates a fictitious world to make it possible to live in stark reality. True, he meets everything with a smile; he laughs at everything, himself, his great men, his state monopolies, his decorated gentlemen, his institutions, muddy trenches and death itself — not because of 'lightness' but only because, as one of your journalists (Sisley

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Huddleston, who is not 'ours') has said, of a certain 'imponderability of mind upon which physical discomfort and misfortune have no hold.' So when the United States is pictured as a terrific land of drunkenness and gangsters and divorce and riotous living, our 'light' Frenchman can be glad to live in Dijon or Bourges. As I said before, you have given him some excuse for believing these marvelous tales for your travelers and students don't always behave well, and your newspapers do bring us incredible reports. Moreover, just as we were getting used to your dizzy prosperity you favor us with a stupendous financial collapse which has dragged with it names we have learned to see written in gold across skyscrapers and banks. These sensational passing phases rise up and hide the constancy of your schools and universities, your health and hygiene, your loyalty and enthusiasm and business integrity, and your tremendous youth. And you expect us to understand you!"

"I HAVE been trying for an hour to make myself heard," said a grave voice. "Such insistence on trivial 'differences' annoys me. Who cares about drug stores and canned desserts and absurd moving pictures, except as they may cast a certain light on vital problems? In 1917 when you entered the War, you saved us, first by your financial aid when our funds were exhausted, then by your splendid army — the Twentieth Century counterpart of Roman gladiators and discus-throwers — and by your wonderful relief organizations. Your army, treating the War like a great football game to be won, fell heir to Uncle Sam's magic wand, as did those who brought relief to starving civilians and pitiable wounded men — they wielded the wand as well as any of our 'typical' Americans had ever done. Now that America was with us, all would come out right. It did, or so we thought then. Your visionary President arrived with all the accoutrement of our legendary godfather and the robes of a prince of peace in the bargain. *We* were weary of war, *we* wanted to believe that this was the *last* — and *he* was stubbornly determined to impose his ideas on a Europe he avowedly did not know. None of us doubted for a second that he represented American opinion — till you refused to ratify the Peace Treaty and enter into the League of Nations, which your President had cut out of whole cloth. Then the man in the street began to have his doubts not only about you, but about his own statesmen and their wisdom: if the United States had not signed the Treaty and the League of Nations Covenant then there must be something wrong with them. Then he remembered that they had been suggested by you and he grew puzzled. Since that day you have been the 'Unknown Quantity in the European Equation,' and in my opinion, until that unknown quantity becomes a negative or positive quantity there is little hope of solving the European problem.

"Look back over the last fifteen years. Your influence in Europe has been tremendous — politically, I mean, for I am in no way qualified to estimate your economical and commercial influence, which, judging from certain evidences, including

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the number of American automobiles, electric refrigerators and moving pictures, is not to be despised. Without you we should probably have lost the War, and that we never forget, though we may think that you have also helped us to lose the peace. The peace treaty, the League of Nations, the Young Plan, the Dawes Plan and the Hoover Moratorium are yours in name and more or less in basic idea and application. These things every one knows. But there are others. You asked England to share her hereditary empire of the seas with you; she did it. You suggested that she change her Japanese policy; she changed it. Your President in 1918 did not wish Czecho-Slovakian troops used against the Bolsheviks; they were left to perish. You will not consent to boycott the aggressor in any future European struggle, so what power has the League of Nations? When a question arises in Geneva, everybody looks toward Washington; if Washington says nothing, the League, too, maintains a dignified silence. Of course it is not your fault if Europe interprets your interventions as she wants them to be, not as they are. She wanted to believe that the traditional American had returned, with peace and happiness for all in his trunks. Therein lies her folly, and the secret of her resentment. Justice impels me to add that she has some reason for her misinterpretation, for there is some magic in the air of Paris that makes your diplomats and statesmen loath to state cold facts. Instead, they assure us that all will come out all right; that America doesn't want to mortgage her future nor to enter into any European entanglements, but that she'll find a way. Again we believe them because we *want* to believe them, because we don't *want* to worry, because one of our besetting sins is fooling ourselves into believing that everything *is* all right.

"As you see, for all the consistency there is in your European policy you might be a mischievous imp blowing substantial-looking bubbles and pricking them and giggling in a corner at the consternation he has caused!

"You say your one object is to avoid entanglements that might hamper you — but how can you avoid them when you have lent money here, sent machines there? Can you be indifferent to your neighbor's acts when you hold a mortgage on his house and furniture? You have so developed your industry that you must have foreign markets if your industry is to survive, yet you put up tariff barriers in a spirit of adamant protectionism. You too are afflicted with congenital optimism — you hope that Russia will behave, that Germany has reformed, that South America, China and Japan are 'solid.' Suddenly you realize that you are mistaken; you appeal to your Government in a panic. Did you ever realize that the most modern of nations in economic, commercial, hygienic and educational development is as strangely sentimental and traditionalist as any country of Europe? Your Monroe Doctrine was formulated when European entanglements would have endangered the life of the nation, when there were no radios nor transatlantic telephones, when it took a month or so to cross the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ocean, when American manufacturing was negligible, when transportation and exploitation were difficult, when your consumption and production were approximately equal, when you had not long been freed of the chains of a hampering entanglement with Europe. In 1933 there is no possibility of isolation; all nations of the earth are caught in the meshes of the net: every time one moves the others feel it, and may have to move out of the way.

"It is not possible, either, to forget at times your Monroe Doctrine and then suddenly call it into play. Intervention without responsibility, refusal to help administer European law as you helped to write it can not stand, if you would have peace in Europe. That peace has been in your hands for fifteen years. If you had followed a consistent policy you would have ruled the world, for no nation has your enthusiasm, your 'vision,' your imagination, your daring and your power of idealizing business. It looks as though the opportunity is gone, for you have lost your faith in your invulnerability — no great leader ever survived his confidence in himself — and we have come to doubt you too: you have surprised us so many times."

"You, too, are forever going back to motives and philosophizing and explaining. Let's get down to facts like debts and Moratorium and the December 15 default. And the Moratorium certainly furnishes the key to the situation. Thanks to it, there is no limit to the possibilities of the future. I for one" — this with a deprecating laugh from the new, decided voice — "wish it had been granted in a generous, unpremeditated response to a desperate appeal for help. Then there would have been a justification for not consulting us before granting a moratorium of all intergovernmental debts. As it is, I am obliged to sympathize with the man in the street who feels that partiality has been shown where it seemed uncalled for. Is it fair to have declared that moratorium less than a week after France had made her June payment, and less than a month before Germany's July payment was due — which in theory covered that June French instalment? Is it fair to have killed — or put to sleep, if you prefer — the Young Plan, which had automatically superseded the Dawes Plan, which had as automatically modified the Treaty? All of those modifications had seemed necessary and had been accepted in all of Europe without too much protest, as I remember. But the man in the street knew only too well that sooner or later he would be called upon to make up the deficit resulting from that French payment and the German non-payment. He could not reconcile helping an erstwhile enemy at the expense of a friend. He admitted in principle that it was to everybody's interest to keep Germany alive and fairly healthy — but he had his doubts about the gravity of the malady and the efficacy of the remedy. Moreover, what rankled was that he just couldn't make that high-handed way of acting fit in with the character of a noble philanthropic American, still dear to his heart. He also remembered that the Young Plan had been hailed as 'final,' and that a certain part of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reparations was not on any account to be postponed, and that France was entitled to a large percentage of that.

"He must have some ground for complaint when such serious, impartial journalists as your Walter Lippmann agree that France should have been consulted before the proposition was made. It would have been so easy to ask all creditors of Germany if they were willing to grant her a moratorium of a year — to say that the United States would then be willing to do the same. It strikes me that most of our misunderstandings and resentment come from being afraid to enter upon frank discussions before taking any step. If this policy had been followed, post-mortem recriminations would have been diminished. But this secret diplomacy, this mania for talking with this or that representative of this or that country and then springing a plan upon an unsuspecting world and demanding instant action are bound to come to grief. Had all nations been consulted France could have voiced her objections before, and perhaps some arrangement could have been reached which would have satisfied every one. Certainly some one would have suggested that there should be some guarantee of a return to the Young Plan at the end of the Moratorium; it might have occurred to some one else that a year would scarcely suffice to set the world straight. Some very good mathematician might even have calculated that since France had already paid her June instalment, it was only fair for her and others who had done likewise to be relieved of their December payment.

"However, after much discussion into which, as usual, political party jealousies entered and had little effect on the outcome, the Hoover Moratorium was accepted everywhere. And, strangely enough, the former Allies were more inclined to be pleased than Germany, who complained bitterly because now the world would think her bankrupt! The rest of us saw a ray of hope for the future, for after ten years, the United States had officially recognized a connection between debts and reparations. This was a step in the right direction in the eyes of most of us. For as you know, one of the things we have never been able to understand (what a lot of them there are, to be sure!) is that you should refuse to see what was so evident to us. We knew that the hundreds of billions of francs necessary for reconstructing our devastated towns, reclaiming fields that had for four and a half years been battlefields, paying pensions to millions of widows and orphans and a million wounded men had been raised by bond issues in 1919 and 1920 — just as your various Liberty Loans had provided funds for carrying the War on to a successful end. That restoration and those pensions could not wait while statesmen talked and calculated and differed.

"You may not remember either that those bonds were bought when the purchasing value of the franc was four times what it is now. That is, a bond for which the "man in the street" paid 500 francs is still worth 500 francs, but according to market calculations the cost of living in paper francs is from five to six times what it was then; so that if he sells

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his bond, instead of the eighty dollars he paid for it, he will get twenty dollars' worth of food or clothing. Of course this same situation exists as far as all bonds are concerned — in fact, all income from investments has diminished in the same proportion. Perhaps you do not realize either that about one-half of the present French Government resources go to pay the interest on these bonds. No wonder the average Frenchman feels the injustice of excessive taxation when the unconditional German payments which should have covered this expenditure suddenly vanish and show little sign of reappearing. Moreover, he can't help contrasting what happened in 1872 in France with Germany's evident determination not to pay. Do you know that to meet the German demands at that time and to free us of the presence of the enemy's army, we raised by a bond issue ten and a half times what was necessary? Naturally the thinking man knows that conditions are very different, but there aren't enough thinking men in any country to make much impression on the mass.

"As for the debts themselves, no one disputes their existence, nor the fact that they should be paid. There was a time when all the expenses of the War could have been pooled and divided equally among the belligerents — that time is past.

"Lausanne, you will admit, bears witness to Europe's conviction that the Moratorium opened the way to the discussion of a final debt and reparation settlement. For there Germany's debt was reduced by ninety per cent, and the payment of inter-European debts was suspended until such time as the creditors should have reached an agreement with their own creditors. Thus it was that Europe interpreted your suggestion that she take the initiative and settle her own affairs. But when in November, 1932, France asked a postponement of her December 15 payment until such time as the whole debt situation could be discussed, that postponement was refused, though the United States — or rather, its Administration (and we in France are as likely from afar to confuse the one with the other as you are when you look at us) had approved of the European way of setting its house in order at Lausanne. It had even admitted that some readjustment might be necessary during the economic depression, while stipulating that there would be no cancelation or reduction of debts. It is easy to say now that instead of asking for a postponement, France should have paid with reservations and a definite refusal to pay any more until some arrangement had been made. But feeling ran too high at the moment, parties lined up against parties or against individuals and the murmur of the crowd mulling about outside the Chamber of Deputies was not reassuring."

"I DON'T agree with that — we should not have paid then. But we should pay now. Paying under protest is only another way of going on paying, and making requests that aren't granted. Now, every one knows that we are in earnest; a good many have realized that the fabulous sums of gold in the Banque de France (which in spite of its name is not a Government institution) do not

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

belong to the French Government nor yet to the Banque de France. Some have learned that the loan we made to Austria just after our famous default — which is likely to take its place beside the 14th of July as a national holiday — was suggested to it by the Bank of International Settlements. (The Banque de France could not do otherwise than accept the incoming stream of gold which represents private or Government deposits and the gold guarantee of the money in circulation.)

"No, we should have paid in December — though the Hoover Moratorium has cost us some $80,000,000, though when we were asked to collaborate we yielded to the very arguments which you refuse to listen to, though by your refusal to discuss our debts you annul the effect of Lausanne, which is to become operative only when Germany's creditors have reached an agreement with their own creditors, so that we seem headed back to the Young Plan. In spite of everything, however, we should have made that December payment, because we want the friendship of the United States. December 15, 1932, was not the time to strike a blow to the friendly feeling of America for France: America was suffering as she had never suffered before; moreover, practically speaking, she had neither Congress nor President and no decision was possible. Therefore the default was worse than useless — and not exactly *chic*." (In the moral sense "*chic*" is the very highest praise that can be meted out.)

"Well, the American Government hasn't always been *chic* toward us. In any event, the Hoover Moratorium upset the whole plan of international relations and freed us from any responsibility. Had you listened to us, as we had been led to hope you would and as we had listened to you, there would have been no question about that payment. So there is no reason to be so squeamish. We did not refuse to honor our signature, we only refused to be the goat. Moreover in the Treaty reparations are given precedence over other debts.

"However, though I wish we had paid on December 15, and though I hope, along with most Frenchmen, including the man in the street, that we shall pay without more ado, I must say that your journalistic tales are as extraordinary as ours. I am told on good American authority that the Frenchman pays no taxes, yet I am under the impression that before the crashes and depressions upset us all, say in 1926, the Frenchman paid twice as much in taxes as the American, though our per capita wealth was only one-sixth of yours, and our national revenue one-tenth. Moreover, we are militaristic — on that you are all agreed, though our military budget was higher before the War than it is now and though our effectives have been reduced from 850,000 to 535,000, of whom only 190,000 are stationed in France, and only 420,000 trained.

"Before you get off on another tirade against misunderstandings I should like to make one or two practical suggestions. Germany's European creditors reduced her debt by ninety per cent at Lausanne, subject to satisfactory arrangement with their own creditors. The remaining ten per cent of the German debt is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to be paid into the International Bank in German Government bonds at five per cent, negotiable in 1935. It seems to me that here is a working basis in accordance with the admonition we received to settle our European affairs before asking for any further consideration of our debts to you. If our original debt were reduced by ninety per cent we should owe the United States — deduction made of sums already paid — some $170,000,000 to be paid by French Government bonds, deposited in the Bank of International Settlements, with interest at five per cent and negotiable in 1935. The difference between that sum and what we should receive from Germany would go toward reparations not yet paid; all slates would thus be clean, all scores settled and the world could turn to its economic recovery.

"Or there is another possibility. If the United States wanted integral payment of the money due her, she should not have permitted the debtors of her debtors to default by granting a moratorium to the party of the third part. Perhaps, therefore, in order to simplify the question, the United States might free all the Allies of their debts, which would be assumed by Germany. In this way reparations would be at an end and the United States could, without jeopardizing other budgets than her own, grant moratoriums and other concessions to her heart's content."

"You have all talked a lot, and I don't see that you have added anything to what everybody already knew. Now it just happens that there is one thing you Americans are all wrong about. I can see that it isn't fair to add taxes to Americans' taxes because we don't pay as we promised. I can also understand, without straining my intelligence, that when enormous amounts of capital are in danger, you have to do something to save them and do it quickly. Months afterward everybody has suggestions, which he would not have made at the time because he wouldn't have thought of them. And I am grateful to the United States, not only for its help when we were at the end of our physical and financial resources, but also for giving our authors something to write about, and our lecturers somewhere to lecture. After all, your opinion and mine about my most intimate friend are so different that no one would recognize him from our description, yet we are both right and both wrong, and it makes no difference to either of us. Why should our opinions of you, or yours of us interfere with our friendship and coöperation?

"But what I started to say was this. France has no protection on her northeast border, over which three invasions have poured in 100 years, devastating the region that produces seventy per cent of her coal, ninety-one per cent of her cast iron, eighty-seven per cent of her raw steel, three-fourths of her cotton spinning industry and one-half of her wool. She can scarcely be called militaristic for arranging to protect that frontier, and certainly recent events in no way prove that she is unduly fearful. The mailed fist brings even Communists and Socialists into line. Certainly if treaties do not guarantee her security she must have an army, and although no one seems to know it, her military

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

service has been reduced from three years to one, and since 1921 her effectives have been reduced, as some one has already said, by forty-two per cent. More than that, our colonies are a long way off — and their area is twenty-three times that of France, who owes to them protection from their neighbors and from internal disorder. It is all very well to outlaw war, but there must be a definite assurance that the country making trouble will be outlawed — to her sorrow. Till that time we must provide for our own security, and at the same time, as many of our British friends are saying, maintain peace in Europe. Disarmament talk is nonsense. The army of any country is not in the men under arms but in the male population between twenty and forty-five. You can't regulate that; if you did the women would take its place. Give me that male population, and the possibility of arming and equipping them and a few officers, and the country will be defended."

"I agree with you, General, and again I repeat that half of our misunderstandings come from not speaking our minds frankly, however useless it may seem in the face of preconceived ideas and determination. But the unforgettable hours we have spent with our American friends in the past must lead to others — for American cemeteries in France with their rows of white crosses, the Marne monument, tablets in Saint Roch expressing American gratitude to Rochambeau and DeGrasse, in Saint Louis de l'Ile paying tribute of the city of Saint Louis to the French King, the Lafayette Squadron memorial, the Blérancourt museum, the American flag floating over Lafayette's grave and countless other evidences of a long friendship fill me with hope for the future. True, the common ground of the present and the future has not the glamor of valiant battles in a great cause; it will appeal to common sense, and to the reëstablishment of prosperity in the world. That prosperity will be founded on hard work and its reward, not on the chimeras of 'friendly arrangements' and Utopian dreams and dizzy speculations — confidence between peoples and credit between nations will grow as markets are opened, as receipts increase, as budgets balance themselves, as factories begin to hum again. And who knows? The excitement of mighty accomplishment may run as high as the excitement of battle, and certainly the honor and profit will reward the nations concerned. This one thing is sure: out of the chaos must come an intercontinentalism; it is the economic and scientific necessity of the Twentieth Century. And here war ends."

The wastebasket is full, the floor is strewn with crumpled notes and clippings. The glorified blackbird has come into his own; his song rises from the silent garden into the twilight sky. Like Henry Bérenger, he seems to say, "And here war ends."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

German Realities

By George Gerhard

Beneath the flamboyant nationalistic flubdubbery of Hitler and his Nazis there are stubborn economic facts which will change his course

Since the Hitlerites have been in power, their deeds have dealt almost exclusively with domestic affairs. They have fought, with the most reckless display of brutality and partisan fervor of modern times, every influence and activity which showed any trace of "internationalism." Communists, Socialists, Democrats, Liberals, Pacifists and Jews are persecuted for the sake of purging the German race. Tariffs, already sky-high, are pyramided even higher to protect the agricultural interests of the nation. Franco-German coöperation, initiated by Dr. Stresemann and cautiously continued by Dr. Heinrich Bruening, received a shock when Herr Hitler's delegates to the League of Nations stood up and demanded the former colonies.

The incessant propaganda for an armed nation has been taken out of the realm of political reasoning, or perhaps of bargaining, and brought into actual, if only partial realization by the addition of some 60,000 Fascists to Germany's *Reichswehr* of 100,000 men. The three most powerful leaders, Hitler, Hugenberg and Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank, agree that the interest which Germany pays annually to her creditors, amounting to over $250,000,000 (or about one billion marks), should be reduced, along with the principal. The wages of the German worker, already at a low ebb, are to be further reduced so that industry may produce more cheaply.

All these — and there are many more instances of the "national endeavor" — are steps designed to achieve what has for long years been preached by Hitler to the impatient masses: the rebirth of the nation. It is true that the actions of the Hitler régime do not always conform with party promises. Some of them are even the opposite of what his gospel had announced for the "day of reckoning." The wage cuts, for instance, are a hard blow for the labor wing of the *National-Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei* (National-Socialist German Workmen's party). The agitation for a reduction of interest as well as of principal of the foreign debt is in sharp contrast to the pledge of fulfilment given by the former Reichsbank president, Dr.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hans Luther. But then, Dr. Luther is not now at the helm of the Reichsbank, and Herr Hitler does not have to rely any longer upon the support of the workingmen, especially at a time when he is proceeding vigorously against German labor in general. He is not only in power but is equipped with dictatorial authority. He does not have to consider public opinion, not even party promises, but can concentrate on the realities.

WHAT, then, *are* the realities of the German situation? Hitler says: "The nation is the only source of strength upon which the German people can rely." In accordance with this doctrine he proceeds to "nationalize" the people in the Fascist conception. It is of no importance for this discussion that the Fascist conception amounts essentially to the same sort of dictatorial régime of a political minority which the post-War years witnessed first in Russia and later in Italy. The significant thing is that Hitler and his programme consider self-sufficiency of the nation as the real demand of the moment. "Reality," to the Hitlerites, is concentration upon the national interests, and necessarily at the expense of non-national factors.

This seems a far cry from German realities as the neutral observer would see them. Not even before the War was German agriculture self-sufficient; it produced only about three-quarters of the country's needs. German industry in the pre-War years was responsible for German prosperity through a tremendous export trade which it built up in European as well as overseas countries. In 1913 German foreign trade amounted to about five billion dollars, which compared with four and a quarter billion dollars for the United States, though Germany had then little more than half the population of this country. Germany's share of world foreign trade was, before the War, 13.5 per cent, that of the United States 11.5 per cent.

These figures show clearly enough how dependent Germany, the most powerful, most prosperous and most highly industrialized nation of pre-War Europe, was upon the world market even before her armies marched to defeat. Yet there is no sign of recognition of these grim economic realities in the political programme of Adolf Hitler. The defeat that was sealed in the Treaty of Versailles emphasized even more strongly the international dependence of the nation, which, with the Fascists in the saddle, is driven ruthlessly into exactly an opposite course — national isolation. How confused a situation must arise from such an irrational and unrealistic policy, may be shown at a glance:

The National-Socialists together with their allies, the Hugenberg Nationalists, put the racial problem of a pure, Teutonic Germany above any other consideration. There are about sixty million people of the prescribed Teutonic blood now living within German borders. But there are nearly six million, or ten per cent, living outside these same borders. Some of them are in Alsace-Lorraine, which was returned to France; others in the Danzig-Corridor; in Upper Silesia, which now belongs to Poland; in Eupen and Malmedy, ceded to Belgium; in the former German col-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

onies in Africa; in Schleswig, now in Danish hands; in Tyrol, now part of Italy. The return of these minorities has been a burning problem ever since the Armistice was signed: it has yet to be solved. From the German point of view it might be a purely domestic affair. But how can a problem be fairly treated so when the legitimate rights of so many other nations are plainly documented? Obviously, the minorities are an international question, and unless they are viewed as such, they soon may be the cause of another war.

The debt service, as was indicated above, must be amended speedily if the "stand-still agreement" which is now in force, is not to be continued indefinitely. Once more, it lies with the foreign creditors to decide this pressing issue for Germany. Or take the export trade, whose revival is of supreme importance for an improved German economy. In past years, Germany had an export surplus sufficient to take care of the interest on her foreign debt service. But the surplus is rapidly melting away. In January the favorable balance of Germany's foreign trade amounted to approximately six million; in February it was only four million dollars. With the boycott movement against German goods augmenting it may be assumed that there will be no export surplus at all in the near future. The stringent tariff measures, especially on agricultural products, are bound to provoke retaliatory measures in foreign countries.

It takes no great imagination to see how much the Hitler régime neglects and ignores this sort of "realities." Many others could be added, such as the need for foreign loans (in view of the scarcity of German capital), the question of an army and navy brought back to full pre-War strength (in this regard the French may insist on having their say), the return of the African colonies (which may go against the interests of the mandatory powers and possibly of the League of Nations), not to mention the document of Versailles which can not be changed peaceably without the concurrence of France.

If Hitler overlooks conveniently the "international" aspects of the German fate, such absurd behavior in face of definite realities is, of course, due to political strategy. During the decade when he fought the various German governments as bitterly as he denounced the Communists, he could not very well base his arguments on the realities of the German situation; for this would have forced him into the same course Stresemann, Bruening, von Papen and von Schleicher were steering. Logically and politically enough, he shifted to the other end of the national bench, with radical, extremist, nationalist propaganda. He promised liberation from hostile, *i.e.*, foreign chains. He would build not only upon the national, but upon racial consciousness. And like the phœnix from the ashes, so would Germany rise over the hatred and envy and supression of a world which has had no greater purpose than the prisoning in a bottle of that homunculus: the *furor Teutonicus*.

EVEN if the Fascists of Germany recognize the realities of economic dependence upon the world and merely adhere for the time being

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to a propaganda-cult which they built up in ten years and can not destroy nor overcome in ten weeks, there is consolation in the fact that these realities are working by themselves. This international trend, which must not be mentioned in Fascist circles and which, nevertheless, will soon enough confront them, is nowhere more obvious than in German industry. And, strangely enough, it is nowhere more clearly seen than in its relation with Germany's traditional enemy, France.

The peace treaty deprived Germany of valuable iron-ore resources. She lost seventy-five per cent of the Upper Silesia output. The Saar Basin is forfeited to France for nearly fifteen years more; the Lorraine fields are definitely lost to France; the Aix-la-Chapelle mines belong to Belgium. What the German iron and steel industry lost through these cessions, it has tried to make up through cartel agreements. As a result, we find powerful syndicates embracing not only the steel and the coal industries but also the all-dominating German dye trust, the textile and machinery branches, zinc, railroad, chemical and many other industries.

The idea of cartelization is nothing new to Germany, which — taking the American example — saw in large-scale organization a step to quick industrial recovery. The number of the more important German industrial formations runs to about 1,000; and the total number of commercial and industrial combines reaches about 3,000, of which 2,500 belong to production and the remaining 500 to distribution, wholesale and retail.

The important thing to remember is that France has found it to her advantage to offer a friendly hand across the Rhine. As a predominantly agricultural country she has not found it an easy task to absorb the tremendous industrial gains which she inherited from a victorious war. The mines and smelters, large manufacturing plants and a great number of laboratories, machines and technical equipment required a certain amount of industrial preparation and tradition which France did not possess. She found both among the steel barons of the Rhine and Ruhr valleys, as well as an enthusiastic readiness to coöperate. Germany and France were helped equally by the coöperative enterprise which was launched soon after the War. Germany gets her coal and iron ore, and France can operate her mines at full capacity; they both reap profits.

This coöperation did not stop with trade agreements. It was soon found that, while Germany had the ability to manufacture, France had more than her share of the world's gold. In due time, French investments poured into German industry. Herr Stinnes, famous baron of German heavy industry and a spectacular inflationist who pocketed tremendous profits while the mark was utterly collapsing, was one of the recipients. Many German industrialists followed his example, except for his speculations. Some of the French funds flew directly into the lap of the ever-hungry manufacturers of the Fatherland; more found their way to Essen and Duisburg through London.

When, in the summer of 1931, the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

German financial crisis precipitated the Hoover Moratorium, the German Reichsbank was forced to pay out $230,000,000 in gold in the first three weeks of June. A short time later, that is, in the four weeks ending August 14, the Bank of England gave up some $155,000,000 in gold. In both cases, French investments (in Germany) were involved to a very large extent. This shows how far French financial coöperation with German manufacturing interests had gone. On the other hand, it is common knowledge that German funds have not hesitated to enter France, and not only because of fear. Herr von Papen, who is Vice-Chancellor at the time I am writing, is reported to have invested large funds in French concerns. Incidentally, he is married to the niece of a French marquis and speaks nearly perfect French. His example (in investment, not marriage) has been duplicated by many a German aristocrat and financier.

In a description of Franco-German commercial relations belongs also the fact that quota systems have been established in the textile (especially rayon) industries; that a new commercial treaty has just been signed more nearly equalizing import figures (Germany heretofore exported to France about twice as much as France shipped to Germany); that tariff negotiations have been launched looking toward mutual concessions; that preliminary agreements were reached (before the rise of the Hitlerites) for a common procedure on the world market; and that, last but by no means least, the idea of a Franco-German economic entente has been actively propagated in German as well as in French industrial circles, both reacting favorably. When Premier Laval visited Chancellor Bruening in Berlin, he was reported to have ready a vast scheme for the participation of French capital in German industry in return for those political guarantees which France considers so vital for her "security." While the present German Government is far from granting any political concessions, it is well to remember that German industry is looking with favor upon such or a similar scheme. And it may also be remembered that in the past the Hitler movement has been financed principally by this same industry.

These international "ties" will continue in one form or the other regardless of what Herr Hitler prescribes for the German nation. Without them, Germany can not live, let alone improve, and the Fascist Government would do well to recognize Germany's dependence upon foreign factors — the sooner the better. Present signs indicate that in spite of their unremitting racial drive at home the National-Socialists are well aware of the outside forces upon which depends a peaceable development of the German nation.

If they really had lived up to the logic of their Teutonic thesis, they would have taken over the Polish Corridor; they would have introduced compulsory military service, and declared the Austro-German union an established fact; they would have united all Germans, including those living in the "minority-territories"; they would have

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abrogated the peace treaties of Versailles and St. Germain; they would have occupied the colonies; they would have abolished unearned and effortless income, overthrown interest servitude, confiscated all War profits and shared in the profits of all large establishments; they would have socialized the large department stores, enforced the death penalty of all criminals, usurers and profiteers, and, finally, granted freedom of worship for all creeds and denominations.

Instead, the Hitlerites have proceeded very cautiously in regard to Poland; they have, so far, taken no steps toward the realization of a "nation in arms"; the Austro-German union has not even been discussed; the minority problem has not yet been given any attention; there is no talk of the socialization of the large department stores; cancelation of the peace treaties is not their especial cause, but has, on the contrary, been propagated incessantly during the last fifteen years; interest payment is still functioning; the War profits are still intact. The ambassador to the United States is not a hot-headed Fascist but Dr. Hans Luther, a man of principles and of common sense. The foreign element has been granted special protection and privilege within German borders. And far from secluding itself, the German Government has gone to great lengths to establish some sort of a united front with Italy.

The confusing aspect of the German situation between the Scylla of heated Fascism on one side, and the Charybdis of a definite dependence on the world of the national economy is explained by the fact that, unlike Mussolini, Hitler has not been able to check the radical enthusiasm of the masses. He promised them a free rein of their narrow appetites; now that the dam is broken, ecstasy and fanaticism are coming down with a rush. The radical wing of the Fascist party has held the upper hand for the first ten weeks of the Hitler régime. As long as it reigns supreme, it will seek its outlet, not in the broad channels of foreign affairs, but within the domestic realm where "patriotic" desires can be most easily satisfied.

There is, for this reason, little justification in viewing the first ten weeks of a German Fascist Government from the viewpoint of permanent action and legislation. What has been done so far, has been forced through very much against the "moderate" leaders of the Government, namely Hitler and Hugenberg, by the extremist leaders of the Fascist movement: Goering and Goebbels. But even Soviet Russia and Italy considered it wise to modify their original policies, though they were much more independent from foreign forces and factors than a defeated Germany.

Assuming that the Hitler Government will last for some time to come, it may fairly be expected that if peace is to prevail, "moderation" will be the next phase of its policy. As a modified Fascism will try to bring back the nation's prosperity, the non-German factors which have been discussed above will ensure that Germany is brought back to international coöperation so that Europe may go to work again constructively.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Spoils

By Henry Carter

The patronage problem, on which President Roosevelt's success so much depends, is more difficult this year than ever before

For a century past the watchword, "To the victors belong the spoils," has stood for a fundamental axiom in American political life; and the philosophy of the Spoils System created by Andrew Jackson has been the commonplace of practical politics. While it has always been polite to decry that philosophy and to point to the virtues of a non-political and all-inclusive Civil Service as the ideal of government, it becomes apparent as fresh and vigorous hordes of political office-seekers emerge at each change of administration that political human nature will not down and that it can not be ignored with any degree of political safety. The operation of the so-called Spoils System has of course been vastly affected and circumscribed by the extension of the scope of the historic Civil Service Act of 1883. It has been further affected by the expansion of the Federal Government into countless undertakings which are essentially non-political — such matters as its scientific and technical services and its increasing excursions into commercial fields, to mention two principal types — which require for successful preservation a continuity of administration and operation not consonant with the maintenance of a Spoils System.

None the less, in spite of the extension of the original Civil Service Act to a point where it covers over 450,000 Federal jobs, nearly eighty per cent of the sum total — excluding of course the army and navy from these figures — there still remain and must perhaps always remain a certain number of so-called political positions which are by both custom and political necessity filled from the ranks of an administration's adherents, be they Deserving Democrats or Respectable Republicans. To determine what these positions are and to award them appropriately constitutes the patronage problem which confronts each incoming administration, and each administration must depend to a surprising extent for its political survival upon the skill and address it brings to the solution of the myriad and often infinitesimal complications of its own particular patronage problem. To this the new Administration of Mr. Roosevelt is no exception.

With the overwhelming success of the Democratic party last November

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it speedily became apparent that the pressure for patronage, for political posts of all sorts, would reach unparalleled proportions. This would be true in the case of any political party which had spent twelve years in the wilderness. To this normal factor has been added the enormous impetus given by the unheard of spread of unemployment in all classes of American society. Furthermore the sweeping nature of the Democratic victory and the exceptionally large Democratic majority in Congress could only mean that from the patronage point of view there would be that many more deserving Democrats for whom claims would be advanced.

Almost immediately after the election Mr. Roosevelt let it be known that all patronage matters would be handled through Mr. James A. ("Big Jim") Farley who was slated to be his Postmaster General and National Chairman of the Democratic party. Mr. Farley was known throughout the country as a thoroughly practical if lamentably honest politician and the hopes of the faithful ran correspondingly high, while Mr. Roosevelt was left free to devote himself to a deep and painstaking consideration of the major economic and social problems which it was apparent would confront his Administration.

In December Congress met in short session, and the victorious Democrats, following the precedent set in 1912 and in 1920, called on the Civil Service Commission for a list of all Government positions not under Civil Service protection. To the considerable surprise and delight of Congress and of local party leaders, the Commission's report, published early in the year, showed some 110,000 positions, including those of 15,000 postmasters, as not subject to Civil Service requirements, and hence, by inference, as available for distribution as political plums. At least this was the interpretation placed on the report by Congress and by the public in general. Mr. Farley's office began to resemble the rush hour of the New York subway as office-seekers, Congressmen and politicians rushed to stake their claims on this or that job listed in the Commission's report.

The unfortunate part about it was that the report had been misunderstood and that only a fractional portion of the jobs it had listed were actually available for political distribution in the usual sense. The fact is that the vast bulk of the 110,000 positions listed are, while not technically under Civil Service rules, at the same time subject to restrictions and qualifications which quite as effectually remove them from consideration as patronage plums. For example the Alaska Railway was shown as having 345 non-Civil Service employes, the Panama Canal Zone Administration as having 9,000, and the District of Columbia about 10,000 municipal employes, but all of these are under specially established local regulations and authority with which the Federal Government does not seek to interfere. There were also listed the 1,500 diplomatic and consular officers of the American Foreign Service, and the 381 officers of the United States Public Health Service, all of whom are appointed only after special examination and upon a merit basis. The report likewise included 15,000 positions for unskilled casual labor. Besides these

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the report's total included a large number, perhaps 50,000, of positions, mainly of a technical or scientific nature, under the various departments of the Government which, while unprotected by the Civil Service Act, are still subject to requirements that remove them from the sphere of practical politics; and in this connection it might be observed that even postmasters, traditionally beneficiaries of the "Spoils System" are required to demonstrate their fitness for appointment to office by passing a Civil Service examination with better than creditable marks.

Thus scrutinized, the imposing total of 110,000 indicated by the Civil Service Commission's report shrinks with a disconcerting rapidity until it reaches a point where it can only be a source of acute anxiety to the political office-seeker and a cause of extreme chagrin to his over-optimistic political backer. While exact figures are not available, the best estimates indicate that of the 110,000 non-Civil Service positions of the Federal Government not more and probably less than 25,000 are available for patronage purposes, which figure includes the faithful army of 15,000 postmasters. Aside from the postmasters, the amended list boils down approximately to the following positions, which may fairly be considered as falling under the head of political appointments:

Ambassadors and Ministers.
Members of the Cabinet.
Assistant secretaries and under-secretaries of Government Departments.
The Governors of Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Philippine Islands and Canal Zone.
Heads of independent commissions and boards.
Bureau chiefs.
United States attorneys.
United States marshals.
Collectors of Customs.
Collectors of Internal Revenue.
Registers, receivers and surveyor general of the Land Office.
Surveyors, special examiners, appraisers and naval officers in the Customs Service.
Superintendents of mints.
Assayers in mints.
Supervising inspectors of the Steamboat Inspection Service.
Commissioners of immigration and naturalization.
Solicitors under the Department of Justice.
In the District of Columbia, the District Commissioners, the recorder of deeds and register of wills.
Also about 4,800 deputy United States marshals, and deputy collectors of customs and internal revenue.

All in all, the number of positions actually at the disposal of the new Administration is a surprisingly small one, and not calculated to bring much nourishment or comfort to the hungry office-seeker. To add to the latter's discomforts the Administration through its economy measures is cutting down on Government positions, and upon Government salaries. Yet it is not easy, in the face of the report, for a Congressman or a local political leader to explain such things to disappointed constituents: his political prestige rests too largely on his ability to obtain for his supporters Government jobs, Government contracts, Government appropriations; and failure to obtain them, regardless of the cause, may well mean political defeat. As Postmaster General Burleson put it to President Wilson in 1913: "These little jobs mean nothing to you or me but they may mean political life and death to a Congressman who is slighted."

It would however be gross error to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consider the problem of patronage and political appointments exclusively in terms of political supply and demand, a supply that is very small and a demand which is unusually great. Likewise it would be a mistake to regard it as one of the regrettable if unavoidable evidences of the depravity of human nature. The fact is that patronage serves two highly important purposes in American political life: it affords the President and his administration an indirect means of controlling individual members of Congress and of thus ensuring support for administration policies and programmes without which governmental action and authority can reel, as we have recently seen, dangerously close to anarchy; and, too, it is one of the principal means of building up party morale and unity to a point where the party can become an effective and coördinated instrument of government. Its effect on Congress, whence proceeds by far the greater part of the demand for Federal jobs, has already been noted and the argument need not here be stressed. The second consideration is of a more subtle and far-reaching importance. Mr. James Truslow Adams has pointed out in a recent article that the future of the Democratic party rests upon Mr. Roosevelt's ability to unite about a common rallying point and a common political faith the discordant and disglomerate political groups which coalesced to put him in the White House and upon his ability to attract the imagination and the support of the younger men to the standard of this New Democracy. With this judgment no intelligent politician, much less Mr. Roosevelt, would be disposed to disagree. To accomplish this result he must give political recognition to the groups he wishes to attract and whose support he wishes to consolidate — the traditional method is through the discriminating use of his power of appointment. That he has some such purpose in mind seems only too apparent from even a cursory examination of his appointments to date — the inclusion in his Cabinet of an ex-Bull Mooser, an Insurgent Republican from the Northwest and a distinguished woman Liberal are indications of his hope to develop a truly national Democratic party, perhaps one "a little to the left of the Centre," as contrasted with a mere collection of local organizations, imposing though the sum total of these latter might be in numbers.

IT WOULD seem fair to infer that these considerations have impressed themselves on Mr. Roosevelt and would account in large measure for the close personal attention he has been giving to the whole question of appointments and patronage in spite of the other pressing and vital demands being made upon his time. This is not to imply that Mr. Roosevelt may be expected to go personally into each one of the twenty-odd thousand political appointments to be made. On the contrary his policy seems to be to confine his personal attention to the few hundred key positions, the positions which will set the tone of his Administration and which will to a large extent make it or break it, and to leave to the capable if heavily burdened hands of Mr. Farley and his assistants in the Government and in the Democratic

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National Committee the task of selecting appointees who will advance the purposes he has set for his Administration and for the Democratic party. His close political advisers include such persons as Mr. Farley, Raymond Moley and Louis Howe, his private secretary of twenty years' standing, men in whose political gifts and judgment he has confidence. But while it is apparent that he has played political ball with his party and has shown an exceptionally open mind to political advice from all sources, it seems equally plain from the calibre and character of his key appointments to date that in all cases they have in the last analysis been based on *his* judgment and *his* decision. If one may be permitted to speculate a little further about Mr. Roosevelt's policies and intentions in the matter of appointments, it might be said that he is determined to have about him in the chief responsible Government positions, particularly those in Washington, a harmonious group of advisers and assistants of whose loyalty and ability he is personally assured, men and women on whom he will have a personal as well as a party claim. This may indeed be "personal government," but Mr. Roosevelt seems to be that kind of a man.

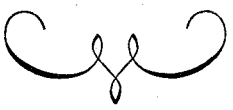
As to the rank and file of appointments which must be filled primarily with an eye to the demands and needs of the party organization — and this number includes a good nine-tenths of the 25,000 available — one may look to see him continue to leave all such matters to his political chief of staff, Mr. Farley. Obviously this devolves a great burden and responsibility upon Mr. Farley, particularly in view of his reported determination to appoint only men of better than reasonable ability and men whose party service is unquestioned. Just how he will go about it is known only to Mr. Farley and the unknown goddess of political fate. In one respect the depression has lightened his burden by making available for public office men of higher quality and ability than has probably ever before been the case. By the same token the pressure for political appointments and the inclusive nature of the task he has assumed as general dispenser of patronage have resulted in such inroads on his time that it has been almost impossible for him to proceed even to the task of filling routine vacancies in his own Department. This delay has occasioned more than a little political complaint, and it has been repeatedly charged that he and through him the Administration have deliberately refrained from making appointments in order that Congress might be held in line for the Administration programme during the present special session. The suggestion is plausible and ingenious, and perhaps the Administration would have acted on it if it had been in a position to do so. However, the question has not arisen, for the simple fact is that neither the Administration nor Mr. Farley has to date had the time to give to the countless necessary details involved in the distribution of patronage, either as a whole or in part.

Political appointments are too delicate matters for haste, and while Congress may howl with aggrievance, considerations are involved, as I have attempted to indicate, which often transcend the special interest of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Congressmen with needy and deserving constituents on their backs. Against the demands of Congressmen, particularly of Senators who have, after all, the opportunity of confirming or rejecting nominations to Federal positions, are the demands made by local Democratic organizations and leaders, by special organizations and lobbies, by community sentiment and by public opinion. These demands must be examined and weighed in each case, together with the essential requirements of the position in question, a general balance must be struck, and certain political amenities must be observed if even outward harmony is to be attained. Obviously the Administration can not and is not going to please every one, and with each appointment there will be created certain enmities and certain party defections — the dictum of Louis XIV that with each appointment he made twenty enemies and one ingrate is not without its bearing on American politics.

The task of making political appointments is a thankless and perhaps a hopeless one. However, if in its performance Mr. Roosevelt and his political lieutenants can avoid making too many serious political mistakes — some, perhaps many, there are bound to be, even in Utopia; if he can bind together and consolidate the political organizations and influences which carried him and his party into power, which will include a generous recognition of elements new to the Democratic party of the past, elements such as the Progressives of the Northwest and the so-called Liberals of the country; if he can bring forward the younger men on whom some day a fuller measure of political responsibility will fall, he will have done much of what can be done toward creating out of political confusion the new and revitalized Democratic party which it is Mr. Roosevelt's clear hope and ambition to bequeath to the country which put him in office. And in this endeavor one can but wish him every measure of success.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Racketeering on Parnassus

By H. W. Whicker

What have we received for our annual three and a half billions spent on education?

Having passed from the heart and mind of the teacher into the hands of the pedagogue, the pedant and the quack psychologist, education is "on the spot." Failing tax returns have forced Federal, State and local units of government to adopt for education the same policy of retrenchment now regulating expenditure in other departments whose cost seems out of proportion to their contribution to public welfare.

Caught in the same net of salary adjustment and unemployment enmeshing representatives of all professions, the educator is attempting to extricate himself by such catchword appeals to sentimentality as, "Must America balance her budget with the ignorance of her youth?" The educator also points to graft in government, the dishonesty of business and banking, public extravagances in anything from prize-fighting to cigarettes and cosmetics, and a general failure of moral and ethical concepts from the close of the World War to the Dawn of Our Great Awakening.

There is truth in what they say; but such arguments have a fatal repercussion: all day and all night come from the same sky; and if all good comes from education, all evil has its origin in the same womb. It is more than probable that every grafter in government, every swindler in business and banking, every fool parting with his money and every transgressor of the decalogue is in some measure a product of our all-inclusive mass educational system. If so, if their number and variety were sufficient to precipitate a national catastrophe, this would indicate a breakdown in education, or at least a deterioration serious enough to undermine its usefulness. To appreciate fully what has happened in education it is necessary to glance briefly at the modern history of the movement.

These United States are a comparatively young nation; and the frontier and the pioneer are still in our blood, particularly in the West. By 1900 the public resigned itself to the fact that strife with Nature in her mountains and wildernesses was near its end, and that a new adjustment to circumstances of a new day made imperative for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

youth a training different from that of the pioneer child. The men who had power and influence were no longer Kit Carsons, Jim Bridgers and Buffalo Bills: they were business men, industrial organizers and promoters; they wore white collars; they were physically soft and flabby; they boasted about their money; and barring certain Malapropian tendencies, they talked the language of books.

As the economic tide began its inflow after the panic of Cleveland's Administration, and the urge for money-making mounted to its normal rage, such men stood out, all at once, as the popular conception of success. The public demanded that its youth be trained for their success, regarding the white collar and the bank-book as the sole objectives of learning: so many years in school, so many years in college, and the individual would rise automatically to the realm of big salaries and big positions. Shrewdly appraising this trend, the educator repudiated Cardinal Newman's theory that the purpose of education is the refinement of the public mind; he compiled statistics, over periods of years, to show the salary differences between men who were college graduates and men who were not college graduates, and he shouted such statistics at youth in every commencement oration. The educator next turned promoter, embracing modern high-power advertising, erecting imposing plants and adopting any expedient of the sensational to stimulate the movement toward his new educational mills. There was a stampede for public schools and colleges—a stampede which may not yet have reached its height.

Public intention was good, though misguided; and the public purse-strings were loosed, nationally, with a liberality that taxes our powers of credulity: billions for State educational institutions, systems and equipment; millions for teaching staffs and faculties; and more millions for the training of these teaching staffs and faculties. In 1900 national high school enrolment was 519,251; by 1928, with an increase of only about fifty per cent in population it had increased to 3,911,279; and during the same period college enrolment jumped from about 168,000 to about 868,000. By 1930 approximately seventy per cent of the population between five and twenty years of age were attending school or college when the census was taken.

The stock market crash of 1929 and its subsequent panic had little influence on the movement. During the past year, according to statistics from the United States Office of Education, there were 26,500,000 persons attending public and private schools. Of the $3,459,375,539 derived from all sources for the maintenance of all types of institutions, $2,822,914,120 went to public institutions, and $636,461,419 to private institutions. The bulk of income for publicly supported institutions, a total of $2,469,311,376, went directly to elementary and secondary education. When the entire cost of public schools, amounting to more than $2,656,420,316 is considered, the annual per capita cost to 72,943,624 persons of voting age is $36.42 a year. The total cost of Federal, State, county and local government runs slightly in excess of $14,000,-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

000,000 annually, indicating that nearly one-fourth of the American tax dollar goes into education. Naturally governors, State legislators and other officials who have seen the homes of their constituents go under the sheriff's hammer, and who at last accept the inevitable in the economic axiom that tax income must ultimately limit tax expenditure, are of necessity paring what they can from educational budgets — hence the lament of the educator who, human in his desire for gain, found the temptation toward racketeering irresistible.

THE first racketeer on Parnassus was the psychologist. Sensing opportunity in the billions invested by the nation in education, he appeared upon the scene armed with the most astounding psychiatric theories, tests and measurements, expressed in a new and bewildering terminology. I mention this for much of the hocus-pocus upon which modern psychology rests first appeared in the pamphlets which went with remedial purchases at the medicine-show stand, and which contained the "Colonel's" own secrets of success, keys to personality and weighty treatises on such mysteries as phrenology, palmistry and the psychic. Educationally, the psychologist had merely to enlarge his vocabulary to include such vagaries as "behaviorism," "determinism," and "intelligence quotient." On the strength of these and other coinages, he claimed infallibility in all matters relating to the human mind.

In reality, it is doubtful if modern psychology can lay claim to a single workable principle that was not more intelligently expressed in the *Philebus* and others of Plato's *Dialogues*. The mind may be a machine — we do not know and can not know for a long, long time. When a physiologist as deeply learned and sane in his utterances as Sir Arthur Keith tells us that the mind is composed of at least 1,800 million parts, we naturally conclude that there must be some semblance of order and system in its make-up, mechanical or otherwise; but when a psychologist like Dr. Watson sets his "behavioristic" sawdust doll up in our midst, and makes it to blink its sightless eyes and whistle from its pneumatic belly like a marmot, and assures us that every mental reaction is positively explainable as an "electrical phenomenon," we get nowhere in the problem, for "electricity" is itself a mystery, and no one, as a consequence, knows what an "electrical phenomenon" is.

We could not take such quackery seriously until it invaded education, where it established itself as "The Department of Education." Immediately it started in working miracles with mental cripples and hypochondriacs. It had the further audacity to fix grades of mentality and classify youth accordingly, arbitrarily branding some morons and others genii. It judged police dogs and guinea pigs by the same standards, and it got precisely the same results. Its findings were sufficient to win the support of an unreasoning public, by then drugged with sensation and absorbed in getting rich. It acquired enough momentum to jam through legislation compelling prospective teachers to take specified numbers of hours in its courses as requirements for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Normal Degrees," without which, regardless of learning or ability, they could not legally teach in the public schools. Such laws, requiring from ten to as many as thirty hours, are now in force in more than forty States. In effect the educational psychologist said to the teacher:

"It is no longer necessary for you to go deeply into your subject, or to have broad and varied contact with life. Dabble here and there. Pick up enough terminology to appear intelligent before your classes. All you really need is our methods of testing and grading. Henceforth, you are not a teacher; you are a laborer in an educational factory, veneering the human raw product which passes through your department. You are neither an artist nor a craftsman. Your tools are a watch and an adding machine. Your business is volume production.

Profit by any means was the end of living during the golden era of Coolidge prosperity, the sunset of a bad epoch; it saw the educational psychologist "muscle" himself in as a "big shot" on Parnassus, dominating State universities, colleges and normal schools, his ability to increase his salary limited only by his originality and daring in mental magic. When his theories proved untenable in practice, as they did from time to time, he evolved new ones and worse ones, and he was perfectly safe for no one knew what he was talking about anyway. Fortified by legislative enactment, he reigned supreme. He could sense the ultimate trend of mass education; he was intelligent enough to know that a bell-sheep must be taken from the herd for personal instruction in the elements of leadership, and that the mass system was forcing the individual youth deeper into the herd, blighting personality, dulling intellectual curiosity and failing in the fundamentals for which education was intended. In the masses chuting through higher institutions of learning he saw spinster ladies lacking the sex appeal to attract mates, and countless hosts of the opposite gender lacking the courage and initiative to face life beyond college walls, and he knew that they would welcome the opportunity for a livelihood in peddling his mental moonshine to elementary and secondary schools. He had founded a lucrative racket by which to prey upon a national educational budget of nearly four billion dollars a year.

Bewildered by the tumult and din of educational industrialization, his temples of learning crashing about his ears, and Apollo and his muses fled, the scholar bowed to the inevitable. There was no longer room for a priest. Parnassus was now a populous manufacturing centre, and its life a routine business of volume production, in which one was either employed or unemployed. The turnstile of a gridiron clicked to a roaring crowd where once the Temple of Delphi had stood. College administrators and politicians were panning gold in the Castalian Spring. There was nothing left for the scholar to do but find him a place in the system and make that place as secure as possible.

This he proceeded to do by forming a closed labor corporation, in which the Doctorate of Philosophy served as a union card for instructor-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ships and professorships in colleges and universities. His selection of the Doctorate for this purpose was quite logical, and economically sound. The law of supply and demand had already rendered the Bachelor of Arts degree a valueless tag. The Master of Arts degree was losing its lustre for the same reason. When, as the scholar surmised, the Doctorate offered some guarantee of salary increases in excess of those to be had from the lower degrees in high schools of the first class, pedagogues flocked by thousands from the testing and grading shops of the educational psychologist to the graduate school, there to spend the time and make the false gestures required for what had been education's highest and most honorable achievement. Graduate schools were then drying sheds for the maturing of scholasticism and pedantry. When June comes, the output of these sheds will be approximately 140,000 Masters and Doctors, and the Doctorate will carry less distinction than the Bachelor of Arts degree had in 1900.

When scholarship had passed through this metagenesis, its administrators began talking to candidates for advanced degrees in terms of wage-scales; in effect, they said:

"You are no longer concerned with philosophy. You do not have the time to delve into original sources. The 'constituted authorities,' who have already investigated these fields, and whose books you must read, will tell you all you need to know. You must skip from period to period, like a flea around an apple. Our stock in trade is Old English, old lace and old bones. We capitalize upon dullness. You will find that there's profit in it."

The routine of such a plan may be appreciated only by one who has personally observed its workings. Some years ago, when I first worshiped at the shrine of Boethius, I visited a graduate seminar to hear a term paper on Chaucer's translation of *The Consolations of Philosophy*, a speculation as nearly divine as any from a mortal pen. The scholar, a candidate for his Doctorate that spring, admitted, during his introductory remarks, that he had not read *The Consolations of Philosophy*, but had devoted his entire research to Jefferson's book-length treatise on its structure, content and possible sources of material. For two hours I listened to senseless drivel, amazed that such a procedure would be tolerated in a hall of learning; but to my despair the report passed as a highly creditable performance.

Some weeks later, this same scholar collaborated with another of his kind in drawing up thirteen hard and fast rules of comma punctuation for adoption by a composition staff in which I was teaching — a code by which, for one violation, regardless of the thought content of his paper, a freshman composition student would be compelled to rewrite his entire paper in red ink and receive the penalty of a failing grade for his efforts. As I listened to the debate over this inhuman proposal, knowing that such masters of literature as Robert Louis Stevenson could never have met or submitted to such requirements, I suddenly realized why the study of the language they speak is more universally hated by undergraduates than any other subject in college curricula.

But to return to my first scholar:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

if he chooses to enter the field of "creative scholarship," he may become a "constituted authority" by publication of treatises, compilations, editings and text-books of composition. If he blossoms forth in print with a manual of grammar, he may be reasonably confident that enough English composition departmental heads will force it upon their unsophisticated freshmen and sophomores to assure him a sale in excess of that of a best-seller novel. It is not unlikely that administrative advancement in his own institution will come not from his influence upon the students under his charge, but from the prestige gained in scholastic circles by the volume of his publication. His students, in the meantime, will be the least of his worries; he will give his time more and more to "creative scholarship."

Ultimately, for examples of this sort are by no means rare these days, his Doctorate union card and his "creative scholarship" may win him the deanship of the graduate school in some State university. Two secretaries will look after the administrative details of his post. By continuing with "creative scholarship" based upon some Sixteenth Century poet who has been forgotten, and for whom the modern world is neither worse nor better off, he should be able to draw from the State at least $10,000 a year for instructing a seminar two hours a week in his subject. This is racketeering on Parnassus.

He will then be a racketeer among racketeers. The vast majority of college students are by nature too intelligent to take such farce seriously. They realize that all they can hope to gain from four years in such a system is a label; that for such a label they must pay a total in credit currency of 128 hours graded according to the educational psychologist. Bored to death — were it not for intercollegiate athletic spectacles and other campus activities — and herded along like sheep, they have enough healthy contempt for grades, and enough scorn for the pedagogues and pedants over them, to bluff, crib and slip by through any expedient. Their racketeering for academic credit and degrees is really quite harmless and sometimes amusing, for the credit and the degrees in question are of value neither to themselves nor to the world at large.

THE problem of education and what education should be troubled the ancients as well as the moderns. More than four hundred years before Christ, Crito, a reputable Athenian, said to Socrates:

"I have often told you, Socrates, that I am in constant difficulty about my two sons. What am I to do about them? There is no hurry about the younger one, who is only a child; but the other, Critobulus, is getting on and needs some one who will improve him. I can not help thinking, when I hear you talk, that there is a sort of madness in many of our anxieties about our children; in the first place about marrying a wife of good family to be the mother of them, and then about heaping up money for them — and yet taking no care for their education. But then again, when I contemplate any of those who pretend to educate others, I am amazed. They all seem to me to be such outrageous beings, if I am to confess

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the truth; so that I do not know how I can advise the youth to study philosophy."

To which Socrates replied:

"Dear Crito, do you not know that in every profession the inferior sort are numerous and good for nothing, and the good are few and beyond all price?"

Again, arguing with Protagoras over the question of whether or not virtue can be taught, Socrates said:

"The Athenians are an understanding people, as indeed they are esteemed by the other Hellenes. Now I observe that when men are met together in the assembly, and the matter in hand relates to building, the builders are summoned as advisers; when the question is one of ship-building, then the ship-builders; and the like of other arts which they think capable of being taught and learned. And if some person offers to give them advice who is not supposed by them to have any skill in the art, even though he be good-looking, and rich, and noble, they don't listen to him, but laugh at him, and hoot him, until either he is clamored down and retires of himself; or if he persists, he is dragged away or put out by the constables at the command of the prytanes. This is their way of behaving about the arts which have professors."

Unfortunately, this is not our way of behaving about the arts which have professors. Crito and Socrates were speaking in a day when *teaching system*, as we understand the term, was unknown; a day when only the sons of the rich and powerful availed themselves of the symposia of Plato, the sophistries of Protagoras, or turned to the loosely organized private institutions in the city for training in the more technical arts and crafts not embraced by philosophy in the abstract; a day, moreover, when a teacher might move with dignity among generals, statesmen, capitalists and pancratiasts. And a fruitful tree of learning the Athenians had: the Golden Age ripened in its crown branches; it gave civilization the system of logical investigation which led, through the ages, to modern science; it gave civilization fundamental principles of government, sound theories of human relationship and workable concepts of morals and ethics; it gave civilization the formalized symposium of question and answer before judge and jury in every court of justice; it fired the imagination of the world wherever its undying embers spread, profoundly influencing religion, and the arts and literature; and it gave us a long and honorable list of true teachers and thinkers which began with Plato and ranged down through the centuries to John Ruskin and Charles William Eliot.

EDUCATION in the true, not the professional, sense of the word must advance. Four billion dollars annually are but a pittance for a nation such as this to invest in the institutions and processes which are needed to fit youth for their social and economic adjustment to the years ahead. When teaching is revived as an art, when stern measures are taken against the eunuchism of pedagogy and when the racketeers of educational psychology and scholasticism are driven from Parnassus, it is more than possible that our

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

schools, colleges and universities will justify their claim to one-fourth of every American tax dollar.

With this in mind, let us, in the words of Socrates, call in our *builders* and hoot down our *professors*. This we have already done in athletics. If leadership, practical experience and personality are prime requisites in a football coach, are they not still more essential to the teacher of those cultural processes which unfold the mind? If the novice and the weakling have nothing to offer in a game so simple, so rudimentary, and so relatively insignificant as football, what hope of any positive contribution from the novice and the weakling in a subject so vastly more important — such as the language we speak, the history and philosophy of our race, the purely cultural arts and those technical crafts and sciences which have to do with the development, the acquisition and the control of the material necessities of life and living?

There are literally thousands of skilled writers in America who, because they are artists and craftsmen, are competent to instruct in composition and impart to students a critical appreciation of the literary masterpieces of past and present. In their rightful places, however, are the racketeers of educational psychology and union card scholasticism, who have miserably stuffed their dead skins with facts which are chaff or given themselves over to the spiritless routine and regimen of pedagogical method for passing out to others what they themselves do not have. We have thinkers who are changing, through their thinking, the course of civilization itself, but they are not teaching philosophy in the classroom — and such a scientist as Albert Einstein could not legally hold a position in the high schools of at least forty of the forty-eight States. We have statesmen, artists, lawyers, doctors, engineers, industrial organizers, business leaders and others who have the wisdom which comes alone from practical experience, but they are out in the storm and tempest while the racketeers of Parnassus husband weed and bloom alike for profit in the gardens they have left behind, and for which their voyaging is done. If the education of youth is one of society's highest obligations to itself, it is high time that we were hearing the voices of our *builders* in school and college classrooms. In any case, we can reconcile ourselves to the certainty that the system of mass education which reached its height during the boom days of the Coolidge Administration is going, and possibly has gone, the way of all other superstructures of promotion and inflation erected for purposes other than public welfare.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Galsworthy

By Montrose J. Moses

"His very excellences may be his undoing"

In the course of his review of *The Silver Box*, when it was first given at the Court Theatre, in London, Desmond MacCarthy commented on John Galsworthy's precision of design, his well-poised estimate of human nature, his cool, well-considered satire, and his strong interest in social questions. As the years passed, his power and distinction came largely from the intensification of these very qualities: his sincerity, his fairness, his unperturbed contemplation, his orderly way of thinking, his neat, compact statement and arrangement of facts, were the marks of his distinctive genius — were at once both his making and his future undoing; for by these very qualities he will be judged and measured for his eventual place in English letters.

Already, since his recent death, the leveling process of estimation has started. It is unfortunate that John Galsworthy had, in recent years, to cope with the raucous demands of a changing taste, and of frayed and tattered nerves. The speed of life, the noise of life, the artificial stimulation of life are what we might call anti-Galsworthian. The sensitiveness of his nature, the gentility of his breeding, the selective reticence of his observation, served in his later years to place him in an era which was closed by the War. He could not change the pattern of his plays to suit the new fashion of the stage; he could not alter his own way of analyzing character to meet the demands of the new psychology of complexes and inhibitions; he could not beat the drum of propaganda instead of exercising the reflective weighing of the evidence; he could not desert his interest in class for a full sympathy with the mob; he could not be lurid in his handling of emotion; he could not forsake a mystical belief in certain universal principles for narrow parochialisms, however much he might picture the parochial mind. Yet, despite his interest in the broad aspects of life and of art and of philosophy, John Galsworthy was essentially English. His claim to whatever permanence he is destined to have rests upon his acute realization of English tradition in character. Who are the Forsytes but the English people of the upper middle class? It is significant that the manuscripts of *The Forsyte Saga* should be preserved as a gift to the English nation.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There was a beneficent spirit to John Galsworthy which added to the lovableness of his own nature, but which detracted from the effectiveness of his observation; he possessed a passionate sympathy for human nature on a certain level; below that level he was more concerned with the condition of society which imposed itself upon the other half, than he was with the unfortunate types themselves. It was a purely conventional view we were given of the toilers in *Strife;* the scrubwoman in *The Silver Box* was a mere sketch in his mind beside the ethical and social problem of the double standard of justice; and in the play, *Justice*, Falder, the errant clerk, was killed in the end because, on Galsworthy's own confession, he really was not worth saving. So, artificially, Galsworthy did away with him. Such an inclination of mind could not be shaken by the white heat of indignation. Yet one might ask of Hauptmann's *The Weavers* and of Gorki's *The Lower Depths*, whether they — with all their propaganda spirit — were as effective upon the moral sense of the public as was *Justice*, which so moved Winston Churchill as to bring about an almost instantaneous change in the prison policies of England.

Because his spirit was not aggressive, because it was not militant, because his statement was tempered by wisdom, the irony of his observation was dulled and weakened — dulled merely by the kindliness with which he removed the mask from the face of human frailty. And may we not believe that it was because he desired to keep his facts and fancies within his own control, that he rarely allowed his characters to become introspective without his being close enough to have that introspection carried on in the Galsworthian manner? All through the pages of *The Man of Property*, one longed for some outburst from Irene Forsyte to make us feel the heat of her own emotional indignation and to see the cast of her own mind as she struggled against the possessive unresponsiveness of her husband, Soames. To say that what Galsworthy wrote was never allowed to be so external as to have a life of its own after it was created, is to say that his habit of mind, his meticulousness of observation were too closely identified with the characters he invented. He once declared:

> As a man lives and thinks, so will he write. But it is certain that to the makings of good drama as to the practise of every other art there must be brought an almost passionate love of discipline, a white-heat of self-respect, a desire to make the truest, fairest, best thing in one's power; and that to this must be added an eye that does not flinch.

Such was Galsworthy the artist and Galsworthy the man. From early youth he was what his friends described as earnest, sure and sound. They also asserted that in his studies at Harrow and at New College, Oxford, while he was not brilliant, whatever subject he learned he weighed deeply and pondered long. The judicial quality of his mind was further developed by his legal studies, which were encouraged by his father who was in the profession. With such a steadied mental habit, it does not take much comment to understand what he himself meant when he autobiographically declared that between the time when he pub-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lished *Jocelyn*, his first novel, in 1899, and 1906, when he made his first essay at drama, "I acquired some first-hand knowledge of the conditions of Capital and Labor."

Any writer who holds serious ideas concerning art and life expresses them definitely and concretely. Galsworthy's essays, the best of which have recently been brought together in a volume called *Candelabra*, are the expressions of his credo. But, also, there is not a page in his novels that does not contain running commentary on economic and social conditions, bearing upon types of people who have either gained his sympathy or else have roused his irony. Pinero, the English playwright, rarely committed himself in statement as to the art of the dramatist. But, in a paper on Stevenson, he at one time admitted that there were a feverish toil and a mental tension to the dramatist's work, about which the novelist knew nothing. It is very evident to any reader of Galsworthy that he knew little about that feverish tension. In the writing, the fervor may have moved him, but, on the written page, there was a fixedness that presented the picture in logical movement but not in passionate tumult. It was his habit of high thinking which called at all times for Galsworthy to show quiet compassion; it was this compassion which endowed his irony with none of the hard, crass sting of Shaw about it. Its strength lay in its gentleness.

There is a terrible meekness to Galsworthy's social criticism. And, logical though he may seem, judicial though he may appear, his writing comes from the sympathetic temperament of the man. He could never have written such a play as Granville-Barker's *The Madras House*, for the simple reason that his realism was always tinctured by his kindliness. His intensity of interest was untheatrical. It was superior to any subterfuge. In fact, there are some of Galsworthy's critics who have claimed that he was too superior a person: that his mental approach to a human problem was almost inhuman. When *Justice* was first given, one of the reproaches hurled against it was that Galsworthy himself was to blame for Falder's death: that the tragic theme underlying the play was imposed by the artist rather than created by society. But Galsworthy was not attempting to write an agreeable play. In his treatment of themes he always came near the tragic consequences, but he did not have the tragic manner. His killing of Falder was a beneficent act. In that distinctive sea poem of Masefield's, called *Dauber*, you will remember that all through the perilous sea adventure, the amateur sailor faced the sternest circumstances, and found his rest and pleasure in painting mediocre pictures. But, just as he was nearing home, he slipped on the icy ropes and was snuffed out ruthlessly. "Why did you destroy him so uselessly?" I once asked the poet. And laconically, the reply came: "To save the world from a bad artist."

There is irony in the writer's craft. There is an irony in all things. It is the irony of life that constitutes the comedy of life. In that gentle social document of organized char-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ity, which Galsworthy called *The Pigeon*, the alien, Ferrand, says:

> Believe me, Monsieur, you have here the greatest comedy of life! How anxious are the tame birds to do the wild birds good. . . . For the wild birds it is not funny. There is, in some human souls, Monsieur, what cannot be made tame.

And then comes the characteristic pathos in Galsworthy's approach to life. This same play analyzes the inconsistency of charity which puts the poor in institutions when they would wish to die. Ferrand says:

> But they would not let me die on the roads of their parishes. They took me to an institution. . . . I saw more clear than the blue heaven that they thought it best that I should die, although they would not let me.

And then, departing from the serious charges of his theme, Galsworthy makes Ferrand speak for him, the artist, with the sensitive poetic nature. He says:

> Those sirs, with their theories, they can clean our skins and chain our 'abits — that soothes for them the æsthetic sense; it gives them too their good importance. But our spirits they cannot touch, for they nevare understand. Without that, Monsieur, all is dry as a parched skin of orange. . . . We wild ones — we know a thousand times more of life than ever will those sirs. . . . Be kind to us, if you will, or let us alone . . . but do not try to change our skins.

Here then is a characteristic example of the irony which Galsworthy wielded: gentle, poetic, true, touching, creating a twinge of sympathy, but in no way shaking the soul. Yet does the soul need to be shaken in violence that the impression may take effect? How about *Justice* and the prison law! This lack of violence, this quiescent sincerity, this gentleness impregnated with the social conscience, will, in the future, be one of the detrimental forces to lose John Galsworthy to newer generations of readers. Every comment he ever made on the theatre has a seasoned wisdom and a rightness about it. Yet, a kindly drama has never been a lasting one; a static gentleness has never created a moving play. And this characteristic of the nature of John Galsworthy was one of the reasons why he had few successes in the theatre. He made concessions sometimes to the outward play: *Loyalties* is an instance. But, fundamentally, in its theme *Loyalties* is a story. *Old English* is another instance, but, fundamentally, its theme is one of character, a chip off the fervor of the novelist.

IT WAS an irony connected with the theatre career of John Galsworthy that with his social conscience he should have been an invigorating figure in the changing drama of his period, and yet have been instrumental in changing so little. His technique was of the older generation. Even his panorama, *Escape* — after the manner of the slice-of-life school — was a succession of little plays, cameos such as one finds throughout his novels. In fact, examine the novels closely, and you will conclude that each chapter, though logical in its place as part of the whole, is in itself a cameo. There would be little confusion in reading the chapter as a lone episode. This episodic, yet complete, manner in Galsworthy is nowhere better seen than in his volume of collected short stories called *Caravan*. This method brought under his observation many of the little ironies of things. He spun these into *genre* pictures of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vivid worth. Thus he went about London finding sermons in stone. He once wrote:

> If men were not disharmonic there would be no irony of things. We jut out everywhere, and fail to see how we are jutting out. We seek solutions, raise our flags, work our arms and legs loyally in the isolated fields that come within our vision, but have no feeling for the whole; the work we do is departmental. The war of the departments is the game we understand; we spend our lives keeping up the ball and taking down the score. The race of men is a race of partisans feeding their pigeon-holes with contradictory reports of life, and when a fellow comes and lays a summary on the desk, they look at him askance; but the future pays attention, for the impartial is all that it has time for.

It was this scoring of departmentalism in *Justice* — the circumscribed limits of vision in the judge, the warden, the doctor, the chaplain; it was the later scoring of this same departmentalism in *Escape* — the convict, the warder, the excursionists, the lady, the parson, that the dramatist held up to gentle ridicule. There is not so much the signs of pessimism in Galsworthy as of infinite pity that marks his commentary. In fact, he never looked for the flare of originality. The wisest words ever written on his contemporary theatre are contained in his oft-quoted essay, *Some Platitudes Concerning Drama.* I find constantly in his statements a self-estimation of his own worth to the future, which might now be well taken into account. He is not dogmatic; he merely is setting down what he believes is the rightful attitude toward his craft. He says:

> Matters change and morals change; men remain — and to set men, and the facts about them, down faithfully so that they draw for us the moral of their natural actions, may also possibly be of benefit to the community.

Even in his attitude toward art, Galsworthy never looked for the flamboyant. Outward excitement of visible action did not deceive him as art. It might result in a momentary excitement of interest. But art has never continued to live because of that excitement; Galsworthy, in all his approaches, whether as dramatist, as essayist, or as novelist, always looked for what he called the inner vibration. The essential quality of art is rhythm; the essential continuance of life is rhythm. Disharmony is the breaking of this rhythm. Art is a form of human energy which results in the everlasting refreshment of the soul. It is a renewal of rhythm from age to age. Has *The Forsyte Saga* that power of renewal? Only, I believe, as it has value of a documentary nature for the historian. It is a wonderful panorama of interlaced relationships; a concerto of minute revelations of minor characteristics, with an insistent, tenacious hold on the main theme of property by which the upper classes reach values. How insistent the theme of property is, is best seen if one reads the story with a pencil, checking how often the line of movement of each character reaches back to the criterion, the standard by which the Forsytes or the English people formulated their judgments of life and people.

The marks of family life in *The Man of Property* are made with an indelible stamp which the warmth of character brings out in acts and attitudes. Galsworthy depicts the Forsytes in full plumage: a civilized herd bound to the symbols of class, regardful of appearances; the family soul is passed in trust to each one of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them. Galsworthy watches minutely for traits; of one of his characters, he wrote: "It was his business to notice things and embalm them afterwards in ink." Whether or not that embalming process is a preservative one is an argument which belongs to the subject of realism itself. But Galsworthy's moral sense is obstinate: if he elects to deal with a family, he will not let go his firm hold on their weaknesses or on their virtues. The slightest provocation for comment has its value. When Swithin gives a dinner, the saddle of mutton on the table has its import. Galsworthy puts it in a colander and strains it of every bit of its human significance. He says:

> To anyone interested psychologically in Forsytes, this great saddle-of-mutton trait is of prime importance; not only does it illustrate their tenacity, both collectively and as individuals, but it marks them as belonging in fibre and instincts to that great class which believes in nourishment and flavour, and yields to no sentimental craving of beauty.

Every one who ran counter to the Forsyte passion for a return on an investment — whether it be material or spiritual — was not of the Forsyte 'Change; he was immediately discounted. Galsworthy's sole purpose in *The Man of Property*, and the other novels which deal with the Forsytes, is to reveal the web and woof of such family life. He saw the value of his own work when he wrote in a preface to the one-volume edition of the entire *Forsyte Saga:*

> If the upper-middle class, with other classes, is destined to "move on" into amorphism, here, pickled in these pages, it lies under glass for strollers in the wide and ill-arranged museum of Letters. Here it rests, preserved in its own juice: The Sense of Property.

So, as a novelist, John Galsworthy created a pattern, neat, dapper — through clipped hedges of sophistication, through paths of English tradition, straight and withstanding the pressure of change, distrusting change. There are no broad sweeps of passionate reaction in Galsworthy; there are no characters of pagan nakedness. He deals with little souls, inbred and clothed in outward fashion. He uses sparingly the incidents of violence; by the time he has turned human motives around on a spiral, viewing the many-sidedness of their effects upon many persons, the moving quality of their meaning has faded, if it has not entirely spent itself. In calm detachment, that which has been the cause of action has become only the logical cause of the effect. He exclaims of the Forsytes, "God forbid that they should know about the forces of nature." He is not of the earthy school of fictionists; yet, when he does make use of the emotional, without the incentive of character, he is inclined to be excessive, to overemphasize. This defect mars the pages of an otherwise sensitive story in *The Dark Flower*. Yet, dealing as he nearly always did with the littlenesses of the well-to-do class — for fundamentally Galsworthy despised the rich — he had a fervor of his own which, if it did not show itself in his characters, did make itself felt in his comments, the breathing of sermons from a text bearing on living life, no matter how small the life: his observation created afresh *the little thing*, a triumph in its own smallness, even though the triumph might be worthy only of contempt. Through the subtlety of Fate's selec-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, he could make you feel the perfection of nonentity in the well-to-do. Many years ago, he was asked if he was a Socialist, so bitterly did he attack the upper classes who shirked the risks of living and were the blindest creatures in the world. He answered directly, unequivocally:

> I am neither a Socialist nor an Individualist. The true path most obviously lies in the middle. The English and American communities have undoubtedly become extravagantly individualistic, and are only now beginning, almost too late, to try and pull their horns in. By one who is not a politician either by profession or nature, but simply an indifferent writer who generally sees both sides of things and tries to see them as they are, and to achieve true proportion in his pictures, extravagances and excrescences naturally tend to get pilloried. Cruelty, meanness and injustice, conscious or unconscious, are the extravagances and abuses of the sense of property, and to hate them is the extent of my Socialism.

This may explain his attitude in such novels as *The Man of Property*, *The Country House*, *Fraternity* and *The Patrician*. But in no sense did Galsworthy attempt to reflect a complete social doctrine in any of his work. He was not a writer of a thesis in the sense that Wells and Shaw interpret a thesis. He never looked for solutions nor stated them. In his play, *The Silver Box*, the law that applies to the rich and the law that crushes the poor may result in dramatic interest, but the one law which should be fair alike to all was his real concern; Justice and its exercise over one poor mortal may present the theatre with some outward appeal to human sympathy, but the monstrous machine which Justice has created to steam-roll over the human equation was what staggered Galsworthy's compassionate mind. Always he had an interest in character over and above the social problem, and this prompted him to reply to the charge made against his drama *Strife*, that it was not a deliberate plan to deal with the problem of capital and labor. He said:

> That was not the case. There were two types of men that I had observed. Both were over strong willed, and when they met there was necessarily violence. It happened that in the case I observed, these types represented Capital and Labor. The play might just as well have been political.

And so, as a judge, he sat in judgment of his own drama, he became so disinterested in his theme that it was difficult to hold the interest and sympathy of the audience. He seemed to say: "Behold, you can not stop a strike by law; watch the failure here because of the lack of coöperation." Which is all very well for argument as a thesis, but not enough for the moving quality of the drama.

In truth his attitude as novelist always tugged at the sleeve of the dramatist. In the mood of the novelist, he always saw character, he always stated the situation, he always showed the law of man working, he always exerted the virtue of solicitude. He has written enough on these problems to indicate his own attitude, however impersonal his position may seem to be. And the main motives in his plays were based on those disharmonies or ironies that keep men apart in understanding — the ironies of uncharitable charities, of disloyal loyalties, of the godless in the formal worship of God. Again and again he returned to the same themes. His passion was always changed into compassion. And so of him may be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

written the same thing that he wrote of the six great novelists he sketched in profile during an address in 1923:

> The foodstuff for their powers has in each case been gathered from the wayward currents of human feeling, the varying pulses of the human heart, the countless ironic realities of human existence. Whatever formal creeds (if any) they may have endorsed, their real creed is summed up in the dwarf's saying: "Something human is dearer to me than the wealth of all the world."

Thus he wrote of Dickens, of Turgenev, of de Maupassant, of Tolstoi, of Conrad and of Anatole France. Thus he might have written of himself.

And because of that love of humanity, there breathes through all the work of John Galsworthy a fine hope, a great faith in the eventual goal of inner happiness. He believed in change — even the Forsyte stronghold was threatened in his various novels. The novelist's sole purposes, the only things worth seeking by him are the revelations of truth and beauty. To step aside from these paths is to be thrown away æsthetically. Therefore, the novelist has only to follow the straight path of non-exploitation. An overemphasis of sex is improper exploitation, an excess of preachment defeats its own ends. So we hear Galsworthy's summation of the novelist's duty: "When he has so selected and arranged his material as to drive home the essential significance of his theme, and pressed out from human nature the last ounce of its resistance to Fate, he has done his job."

The gentle humanitarian has dropped his pen; his last book is written, the critics are now edging him into his proper place on the shelves of time. It may be that the future will be unkind in its rigorous demands; it may be that he was too contemporary to last; it may be that his style is too discursive — however neat — his content too little, and too dependent on the evanescent displays of minute social custom; it may be that the themes he discussed were too slight as text for his long novels; it may be that his intricate meanderings were too distracting; it may be that his writings have served their purpose and have not, after the condition is passed, enough strength and vitality of character left in them to bridge the chasm leading to another age. Even so, I have a suspicion that *The Forsyte Saga* will remain a very vivid human document for the historian of the future. That may be a sad fate for the novelist. Yet that may also be the penalty for being the gentle man, for being the compassionate citizen.

The main current, I fear, is stronger than Galsworthy. Yet of his contemporaries, who any worthier than he? Who any more zealous of his craft? Who with a keener eye on his own civilization? He was not always the artist: his sense of American character was deplorable; he was not always the dramatist: his plays were often murky and weak; he was fragmentary, too casual in his essays for force. But, when he sang the saga of English family middle-class life, he was supreme. Hugh Walpole, in *Fortitude*, in *The Duchess of Wrexe*, in *Maradick at Forty*, has, without such a social sense, modeled himself on the Galsworthy tradition of character in English life. But Walpole is not so much the artist in his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

handling of material. His sense of character is of the Dickens tradition. Though not of the same stature, Galsworthy's sense of irony relates him to Thackeray. Yet, where has Galsworthy a character to remain in mind as Colonel Newcomb remains; where the modern counterpart in Galsworthy of a Becky Sharp? *The Forsyte Saga* is a portrait gallery of finely etched faces that are so dependent on their era that they can not be long remembered apart from it. Thus Galsworthy's very excellences may turn out to be his undoing.

Grace Before Thought

By Frances Taylor Patterson

Save me from peace. Do not let me fall
Into the quiet reaches of the mind,
Sheltered from the wind
Of doubt. Build me no wall
That question can not scale,
That issue can not vault.
Admit inside the pale
Error and schism. They have a way
Of bearing witness to the truth.
Lay on no roof to thought
Which will not let me climb
To that which may be sought
In chartless space.
Lay no stone base
Which will not let me dig
Into the sinews of the earth,
Into primordial slime,
Where theory goes to school to time.
Let the urge to know without end, without cease,
Give me no rest, give me no peace.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Middle Western Growing Pains

By F. B. Nichols

Largely because of economic immaturity, the prairie lands suffer worse from depression than other agricultural regions

A large truck filled with fat cattle moved slowly into the industrial district of Kansas City. The owner of these animals sat beside the driver. For nearly two hundred miles he had been watching farmers at work on their spring tasks in the fields. An endless panorama of growing gardens, busy poultry flocks, contented dairy cows and fattening hogs had unfolded around the rural homes. It had been a trail of great activity and abundant promise for the harvests of 1933.

Then the picture changed abruptly to the desolation of Middle Western commercial life in a time of depression. Few employes were in sight around the factories. Even the switch engines were still. Production was at a low ebb. Many of the plants had been closed. Smokeless chimneys throughout the area registered their dots on the mirror of woe.

Presently the vehicle turned into a street which led to the stock-yards. It soon came to a stop before an unloading platform. The stockman stepped to the ground and stretched tired muscles, cramped by the long ride from his feed lots. "It seems to me," he remarked to the truckman, "that the manufacturers aren't doing much busi ess these days. The Middle West evidently still depends mostly on the money made by countrymen. And that means this region has a big task ahead in building itself up. Conditions will be unstable for a long time."

The livestock producer was stating an old but little understood attribute of a land in its callow days. Few explanations of the unrest in the prairie States outline the problem so frankly. It usually is ignored by champions of the great open spaces. They give little heed to records of violent swings in commodity values and urban effort over this huge area. Sometimes the omission is due to ignorance. But frequently it is a deliberate policy, especially among Senators and Congressmen from the Middle West when they are delivering addresses for home consumption. Many of the classical examples of "talking all around Robin Hood's barn" — borrowing an expression from the language of the Middle West — on its commercial problems are embalmed in the Congressional Record.

And yet the Middle West is a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

noted example of an economically youthful land. No better illustration from the United States is available to professors of economics for use in lectures on the hardships inherent in such regions. But even some executives of financial institutions, and especially mortgage bankers, have failed to grasp the plain implications of grief during a period of depression. The oversight has brought both an overexpansion and excessive deflation of the area in the last decade.

This general inability to see its limitations has been due partly to skillful propaganda by chambers of commerce in the territory west of Chicago. For years they laid great stress on the budding industrial development. Their theme was that the prairies had grown out of the agricultural epoch. Especially did the secretaries bear down hard on the magnitude of city pay-rolls. And before 1930 they were able to juggle income figures in an impressive manner.

But an analysis of their exercises in arithmetic shows that this region is merely in the first stages of erecting an urban civilization on the farm foundation. A large share of the salaries and wages over which commercial leaders in Omaha and Kansas City delight to gloat, for example, comes from meat-packing plants and flour mills. Such establishments simply prepare agricultural products for sale to consumers. Another considerable part of the income goes to employes of vast distributing companies that obtain their business directly or indirectly from rural people. Transportation units which serve countrymen contribute another big slice of the funds. And most manufacturers produce equipment for farm and ranch use, like stock tanks and feed grinders. Here and there, however, is an industrial organization which does not look to agriculture for any broad share of its profits. But in many instances the larger concerns of this type are oil refineries and coal mines, and they also are thoroughly depressed.

Speaking generally, therefore, the Middle West depends for income on the raw or partly processed farm products it sells to surplus food consuming regions, usually in the Eastern United States or Europe. And this vast area buys the larger part of the non-agricultural commodities it requires from manufacturers located in the East. A great deal of the capital investment, in both town and country, has been borrowed. The prairies thus reflect an almost perfect picture of economic immaturity. A better understanding of this set-up, with all it conveys in the operation of the business cycle at various stages, will aid in building a sounder financial structure.

ESPECIALLY would it help if the people remembered records of extensive swings in commodity prices. These are an almost constant plague to farmers in this region. At infrequent intervals they have been remarkably severe. Unusually destructive price debacles, for instance, occurred throughout the Middle West in the 1870's, 1893 and 1932. In every case these were followed by important political reactions, like the one registered at the last general election. Such unrest always has occurred in economically young farming countries following abrupt and deep declines in the markets. It

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exists generally now in Western Canada, South America, Australia and New Zealand.

But it is not so common in the older agricultural areas. While these localities also suffer greatly from price typhoons, they are aided during lean years by the power of accumulated capital, and in most cases through active markets nearby in large cities and industrial communities. There is far less discontent today among rural people in Ohio and Pennsylvania than among farmers in the Middle West. The producers in the East are obtaining higher prices, inasmuch as they pay a lower toll in selling and transportation costs.

Agricultural prices in the United States have declined 55.8 per cent from the average levels of 1929. In August of that year they stood at 143 per cent of the pre-War index figure. But the changes in values of commodities on my farm (near Buffalo, Kansas) have been far greater than the national averages. The low market levels of this spring, when compared to the higher prices elsewhere, illustrate the handicap that countrymen in the Middle West must be prepared to face. Wheat, for example, is selling at our local elevator for thirty-eight cents a bushel, while forty-eight to fifty-five cents is being paid east of the Mississippi River. I received eight cents a dozen this week for my eggs, about half the price paid to poultrymen in New Jersey. And the difference in butterfat markets is almost as great. Hogs are worth $2.85 a hundredweight here, although about $3.50 is being offered at most local markets in the East. These quotations represent quite accurately the normal variations between my markets and those nearer the thickly populated centres with most other farm products.

The current commodity values in the prairie States are absurd and distressful. They have brought poverty to rural people and chaos in urban homes. In many cases their broad social effects have been far more destructive in the cities of the Middle West than on the farms, for countrymen normally have plenty of food to eat. The situation is deplorable. But it is not new! Once more we are experiencing a major market avalanche. And if economic history offers any indication of future trends it follows logically that the business cycle again will bring a period of general collapse in the prices of crops and livestock. Will it leave the usual wreckage in the Middle West?

A PART of the losses which are so common during an agricultural depression easily could be avoided by an application of more conservative policies during prosperous times. And before 1929 the American people gave much attention to plans for exerting at least a partial control over the business curve. Perhaps they will renew their interest in this instructive avocation. In any event it seems that the people should have a desire to conduct their affairs in a manner which will aid in avoiding some of the terrific deflation that is certain to accompany the next period of hard times.

Problems which arise from indebtedness are much in the foreground of interest these days. In view of the various types of moratoriums (farm mortgage and otherwise) that are in effect over the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Middle West, it is evident that one much-needed improvement in the financial scheme is for people to get out of debt — and then stay out! This will not be easy. The project will require years of effort. And it will call for a further development in the art of sales resistance. But if it can be achieved the farmers will secure more restful slumber. For "when you run in debt," as Benjamin Franklin said in the long ago, "you give another power over your liberty."

Fortunately the prairie region contains many individuals who have an accurate perspective on the dangers inherent in borrowed money. They should be a source of inspiration to their fellows who are all but filled with the blackness of despair as they ponder on the current financial woe. In Kansas, as an illustration, fifty-six per cent of the farms managed by owner-operators are free of mortgages. Such men, who may be found in considerable numbers in all States, occupy the most secure position these days of any large group in the nation. They can not be removed from their home or job so long as taxes on the property are paid.

Incidentally, these debtless rural people have done the soundest thinking during the last decade that was registered by the various big classes of American citizens. They had little or no confidence, for example, in the stability of the United States during the three years preceding 1929. Such individuals were talking about the "hard times of the 'Seventies" when economists were wondering if the secondary depression following the World War would arrive on the normal schedule for similar events — as it did! And they constitutionally are unable to see any virtue in Wall Street and its works. So these far-seeing farm owners kept buildings painted, stayed free of debt, accumulated a little ready cash and otherwise prepared for the avalanche. If more people in the Middle West had followed their example this region would be on a firmer foundation.

Fate apparently has decreed, by the way, that the business plans of conservative and debt-fearing farmers always should run against the drift of popular thought. Even early this year, when many people could "see no way out of the mess," this group was far less pessimistic than in 1928. Its members ventured frequently to forecast upward trends in prices during 1934 and 1935. And if they dealt in cattle these men usually were buying steer calves, which will be ready for market in those years.

If rural people make a determined effort to avoid debt during the next boom it will help in preventing land prices from being elevated to absurd heights. This restraint is necessary in any project which aims to cushion the violence of the succeeding financial crash. Its importance is illustrated today by the dark debris in Iowa, where an overcapitalization of the soil reached its most dizzy pinnacle. Farms in that State sold for $500 an acre or more in many instances from 1918 to 1920; these prices were not justified by even war-time market levels. And it was evident at the time that such conditions could not endure.

The farmers of Iowa have no logical excuse for becoming involved in their absurd speculations. But all classes participated in the bubble.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And rural people were encouraged in their blind optimism by agents of mortgage companies, paid as a rule by commissions on the business placed, who gave approval to loans at fantastic figures. The executives of these concerns apparently were unable to understand the nature of the unstable pyramid they were erecting. Many of those swollen mortgages have been foreclosed in the last year, after the time allowed for payment had been extended once or twice. In most instances such investments will be liquidated at a serious loss to the creditors. In the meantime the debtors have lost all their savings.

But the bankers ran true to form during those foggy years. They generally have lacked an historical perspective on farm prices. Especially do these financial leaders commonly fail to understand the relationship between land values and earning power. For this is a highly involved problem that sometimes is difficult to grasp by men trained in agricultural economics. It will vary from farm to farm in the same locality. Even the technique of measuring earning ability is difficult to state. But in the pasture country it exists in the most simple form. This year, as an illustration, I am pasturing mature steers, with four acres allowed to the animal, on part of my land to sell for six dollars a head. Such grassland would bring fifteen dollars an acre; sixty dollars' worth of property is being used for every steer. If six per cent is a fair return on the investment, $3.60 must be charged to interest. Taxes for 1933 may amount to twenty-five cents an acre; one dollar will be required in meeting this overhead item. My total outlay on these costs, which are the main ones, therefore will be $4.60. And I shall have $1.40 left for maintaining the fences, to pay the small cost of the salt an animal eats and for profit.

In many instances, however, cattle are being pastured in this section of Kansas for a five-dollar price. Forty cents perhaps would pay for repairing fences and the salt, but it certainly would give little or no profit. And if the land valuation were increased to twenty dollars an acre (in many cases before 1929 similar bluestem areas sold for twice that sum), the transaction obviously would result in a loss.

Land valuations and pasture rentals do their dizzy dance up and down the scale almost every season, depending largely on the prices paid for beef in great central markets like Kansas City and Chicago. But despite these variations it is much easier to measure the earnings of pastures than of more fertile areas that are planted to cultivated crops. The overhead and production costs on such fields change from season to season. Yields also are certain to vary greatly from year to year, due to the influence of climatic conditions and methods of cultivation. And it is impossible to forecast the price trends of crops accurately.

In other words, the commercial structure of agriculture and its earning power have refused to "stay put" at any level. But all classes in the United States, including consumers of food in the cities, agree that it would be helpful to the nation if the prices of farm products would remain more nearly stable. And Congress

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has been tinkering for years with economic forces in an effort to avoid extreme fluctuations. This was the object of the stabilization activities of the Federal Farm Board, for example, which have been compared to the performance of a bull in a China shop.

No economists of my acquaintance are prepared to forecast that the stabilizing theories of politically minded ladies and gentlemen in Congress always will result in failure. And they generally reserve judgment on the agricultural ideas of President Roosevelt and Secretary Wallace, who are respected for their broad interest in rural problems. Some countrymen are quite hopeful about the new national policies. But students of political economy have not been impressed with former Government projects for increasing the farm income. And neither am I, especially while observing the eighteen-cent corn and thirty-four-cent wheat in my bins.

But both the learned professors and rural people agree that it would be helpful if the base of farm products markets could be broadened. This might be accomplished through a growth in foreign sales. These formerly were quite large, especially for wheat and pork. They have declined now to tiny proportions. The producers commonly believe that much of this loss was caused by high tariff walls and ill will in other lands which resulted from an ineffective foreign policy of the United States Government. They think it can be improved. And most thinking farmers realize that a revision of the War debts is essential in this project.

If a better international position under the present Administration should bring a recapture of the large outlets abroad for American farm products it would aid in maintaining prices during the next depression. For it is evident that most of the markets have been pounded down to their current levels by surplus production which in the past was sold to other lands.

Farmers also would be glad to see more industrial activity in the Middle West. It could increase the local demand for food and thus aid in holding prices more nearly stable. But the growth in manufacturing is not likely to come very rapidly. Agriculture is certain to be the dominant industry in the prairie region during this generation. Economic maturity will be achieved slowly.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American Novelists vs. the Nation

By Louise Maunsell Field

Does Jones sometimes exaggerate, or is he a damned liar?

Nations are known by their novelists. Known, not only to other nations, but to different sections of their own. Aided and abetted by the motion pictures so often made from them, as well as by direct translation, books are little if at all impeded by frontiers. The word pictures they convey of a nationality are only too frequently accepted as photographically accurate studies of that nationality, and as such become impressed upon the minds of people belonging to other races and other nations, impressed more clearly, more deeply, than is often quite realized. And if those pictures are false or distorted, misunderstandings may and sometimes do result, misunderstandings too firmly engraved to be erased by any number of Peace Conferences.

For while it is true that the intelligent of every nation measure every other by standards far broader, far more comprehensive than those established by its fiction, the intelligent of any nation constitute an extremely small minority of its population. The effect of the written word, moreover, even upon the comparatively intelligent, is frequently very great and very lasting. Because their enemies, the Hebrews, wrote them down as cruel, the fact that the Egyptians were the most humane of all the ancient peoples is one even the fairly well educated ignore, or are slow to accept. French fictionists convinced the rest of the world that the triangle situation was the only one in which France was vitally interested; it was years before a goodly portion of our own Northerners ceased to regard the South as inhabited principally by Legrees and Uncle Toms. Those English novelists who sneered at England had their share in bringing about the World War.

But while the evil of fomenting misunderstandings between nations is readily seen and as readily acknowledged, the peril involved in misinterpreting one section of a nation to another seems quite unrealized. We Americans are inclined to preen ourselves on the vastness of our country, with its borders stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We are proud that we have every type of climate, that settlers have come to us from every quarter of the globe, representing every race, tradition and form of culture. But on account of these very conditions

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on which we so pride ourselves we, more perhaps than any other people in the world, must depend largely upon our writers for our knowledge of one another. Only a few of us have wealth enough and leisure enough to be able to travel from end to end of this huge country of ours, while in order to live in each section long enough to become really acquainted with its inhabitants, their customs and point of view, it would be necessary to emulate Methuselah. Interests, aims, temperament and way of looking at life are totally unlike. What is a matter of course in New York may be anathema in Tennessee.

While these diversities could and often do enrich the nation, they also make a general, sympathetic understanding of one another's customs, ideas and problems extremely difficult. The possibilities are magnificent; the actualities often deplorable. Differences that might make for enlargement often make only for jealousy, contempt or dislike. Various sections, prevented by the very size of the country from coming into really close contact with one another, only too frequently have either an exaggerated estimate of one another's deficiencies and idiosyncrasies or a completely distorted view of them. And for these exaggerations and distortions American novelists are largely, though by no means solely, to blame. They are the portrayers, the interpreters of the sections they know or at any rate choose to write about, not only to those foreign lands in which their books may or may not circulate but to every portion of their own. How many of us, for instance, knew anything at all about the lives, customs and habits of thought of the dwellers on the frontier of the Florida scrub before we read Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's sympathetic and interpretive *South Moon Under*, one of those all too rare books which promote understanding instead of misunderstanding?

A majority of the inhabitants of each and every one of our many sovereign States unavoidably acquire their ideas and opinions of all the others from what they may happen to read about them. The accounts novelists give, the motives they assign are often accepted in their entirety, not only by stay-at-homes but even by those who, although able to travel and see the country for themselves, unconsciously don the blue or rose-colored glasses provided by their favorite fictionists, look for what they have been told they will find, and invariably, or almost invariably, discover it. For the fictional interpretation is seldom completely false; it is simply overemphasized and distorted.

The reason is of course all but self-evident. If you quietly remark that Jones sometimes exaggerates, your statement is quite likely to pass unnoticed, but if you go out into the middle of the street and shout at the top of your lungs that Jones is a damned liar, it is more than probable that you will attract somebody's attention. Possibly the attention of a large number of somebodies. And there, you see, is the very essence of the trouble; Jones, the occasional exaggerator, has been repeatedly and vociferously denounced as a damned liar.

The American people as a whole,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moreover, are apparently afflicted with an inferiority complex which makes them positively delight in being abused. An ailment out of which certain astute persons like George Bernard Shaw have made abundant profit. As a nation we are, it would seem, best pleased when presented in the worst possible light. And not by foreigners only. Many of the most popular among our own best-sellers have won their enviable position by a portrayal of some phase or other of American life which was as scathing an indictment as their abilities would permit.

Consider the fiction which professes to reveal the truth concerning the Middle West. Not a few of our present-day novelists have emigrated from its small towns and villages with, it would seem, rancor in their souls. Rancor enhanced, it may be, if not engendered, by the fact that neighbors everywhere are prone to believe that Smith's boy can't possibly develop into anything very wonderful. Didn't they know him when he was in knickers? The result is that the Middle Western small town and even city has been presented to the world as unendurably dull and unutterably dreary, inhabited almost if not quite exclusively by mean, malicious, self-satisfied people without a spark of independence or originality, with no interest in books, art, music or drama, wallowing contentedly in a mire of banalities. Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* was among the most extreme of these presentations; it was also among the most popular. And because other nations as well as other communities very naturally like to feel that whatever their faults and shortcomings may be, they can't possibly be as bad as all that, the novel has been accepted all over the world, as well as over a large portion of the United States, as an accurate picture, so accurate a one indeed that its title has become a synonym for the small town. No wonder its author is popular abroad, since he shows the United States as other nations like to believe it is; but only interstate jealousies and our national inferiority complex can explain his large audience on this side of the Atlantic.

After the great success of *Main Street*, the logical next step was to present the Middle Western business man, making him the flesh and blood embodiment of many of the small town's most objectionable characteristics, but endowed with an added blatancy supposedly typical of the Middle Western city, a creature of rubber stamp opinions, rubber stamp ideas. Meanwhile, Louis Bromfield created the "Town" in which the action of so many of his very notable novels has been laid, from *The Green Bay Tree* to *A Modern Hero*, portraying its inhabitants as the sort of people who inevitably would admire *A Good Woman* of the type he so ably presents. Sherwood Anderson, Willa Cather and others too numerous to mention emphasized the same points of meanness, dullness and dreariness.

The fashion thus firmly established by some of the few capable of writing about dreariness without being dreary, the degree of a Middle Western novel's dullness presently began to be taken as the measure of its truthfulness. Novelist after

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

novelist, whether writing of town or country, prairie farm or village, drew some form, but slightly varied, of unmitigated dreariness, appalling ignorance and yet more appalling stupidity. The intelligent young man or woman, thwarted and condemned by the chuckle-headed bigots of his or her home town and struggling to escape therefrom, became one of the most tediously familiar figures in fiction; possibly because it was in this guise that more than a few of our fictionists saw themselves.

Occasionally, of course, some voice is raised in protest. A few years ago, Booth Tarkington came forward as the champion of the American business man, whom he likened to an ancient Roman. Unfortunately, the boorish, illiterate, prodigal *Plutocrat* he drew was but the more objectionable because of a tacit demand for the reader's admiration. Yet even this unconvincing attempt to show that the leopard, though spotted, is not without good qualities was welcomed with a warmth which would seem to indicate a faint suspicion on the part of the reading public that all that glitters is not necessarily composed entirely of brass. Despite such rare protests, however, a great section of the country has been all but consistently held up to the derision and scorn, not only of the rest, but of all other nationalities as well. Jones, the occasional prevaricator, has been denounced, not once but very many times, as a damned liar.

The Far West, on the other hand, has suffered from an overemphasis, not of the sordid, but of the romantic. The Spanish tradition depicted by such novelists as Gertrude Atherton has thrown a glamor over one section; the figure of the cowboy, usually described as a modern Sir Galahad whose character is as admirable as his grammar is deplorable, has flung its picturesque shadow across another. This cowboy-dominated Far West of fiction is a kind of Wonderland where dashing youths perform miracles of gallantry as well as of horsemanship, and gold mines are the frequent, though not invariable rewards of noble deeds. Which is one reason why "Westerns" are so popular on the screen. Long ago Bret Harte sentimentalized the professional gambler into the regular heart-of-gold bad man of fiction and melodrama; the pioneers have succeeded the dethroned Pilgrim Fathers as models of all the more rugged virtues. That marvel of stanchness and courage who is the heroine of Rose Wilder Lane's tense and dramatic tale of early settlers, *Let The Hurricane Roar*, is a typical heroine of that fiction of pioneer days which still retains the lure and glamor of romance.

In fact, many of the tales of America's past draw a picture which compares more than favorably with its present. Janet Ayer Fairbank's *The Bright Land*, for instance, is a pre-Civil War chronicle of likable people living for the most part very easy, comfortable lives until the on-rushing tides of war threaten to drown them in blood and tears. Yet even when telling of America's past, the colors used are sometimes dark enough. *The Sea Witch* of Alexander Laing contains numerous accounts of brutality both afloat and ashore. The Indians of David Garnett's careful and conscientious story of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pocahontas, despite their unpleasant habit of torturing their captive enemies, seem on the whole more agreeable as well as more intelligent than the white invaders.

THE South, so soon as the Civil War bitterness had begun to die away, was depicted as a land of romance, where flowering jasmine, beautiful, idle, languid ladies, white-porticoed mansions, comic but devoted Negroes and elderly gentlemen endowed with snow-white hair and a passion for mint juleps blended into an effective background for one Romeo and Juliet tale after another. Usually a Union hero adored a proud Southern heroine, the lady's brother not infrequently taking Tybalt's place as a maker of complications. But recently, and somewhat violently, the fashion has changed. Ellen Glasgow, to my mind the outstanding American woman novelist, has implied if not precisely expressed an opinion that the much-exploited Southern chivalry was largely composed of apple-sauce, and other writers have been almost equally iconoclastic. Present-day portrayers of the Southern Negro emphasize his difficulties and the squalor of his surroundings a good deal more than they do his loyalty or his humor. Stribling's *Birthright* is but one of many Southern novels which are grim, rather than romantic. William Faulkner's much-belauded *Light In August*, as well as many of his other tales, goes further than most of these, showing a South inhabited by men and women stunted mentally and spiritually, a region of drunkenness, insanity, lust, perversions of an utterly hideous kind.

Yet it is perhaps New York City which on the whole has suffered the most and in the greatest number of ways at the hands of the novelists. Look at the accounts of that section of it known as "Society"! Even the comparatively few fiction writers who really do know something about that particular portion of the community have for the most part been unable to resist the temptation to do the dramatic thing, and shout aloud that Jones is a damned liar. It is, moreover, always more conducive to popularity to describe this envied class as frivolous, empty-headed and empty-hearted, vain, unmoral rather than immoral, marrying for convenience and divorcing for amusement, breathing as their native air an atmosphere thick with moral miasma, than it is to show them as they really are, endowed with at least an average share of the commonplace virtues. The Wall Street "magnate," the corporation lawyer, the New York business man are portrayed as being, if possible, rather worse than their Middle Western brethren; quite as stupid, quite as convention-ridden and even more ruthless. The female of any of these species, should she take to charity, does so either to curry favor with her social superiors, to give herself the pleasure of harrying the poor, or to obtain newspaper publicity, after the fashion of the wealthy female philanthropist of Sinclair Lewis's latest novel, *Ann Vickers*, never from an honest desire to help those less fortunate than herself.

As for the literary and artistic set, their lives, according to many of our novelists, resemble those of the socially eminent in being just one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cocktail party after another, one illicit love affair after another. The principal difference lies in the luxurious surroundings and physical cleanliness of the one, and the dirt and disorder fictionists have insisted upon presenting as an integral part of the lives of all their characters who chance to be painters, poets or musicians, these being portrayed as able to work only in a chaos of filth and discomfort, finding, it would seem, inspiration in unmade beds and ecstacy in unwashed dishes; a presentation for which many authors lack even the excuse of ignorance.

Nowhere, it would seem, is the inferiority complex already mentioned more prevalent than in New York, which apparently likes nothing so much as being told that it is absolutely and completely despicable; an opinion which has been firmly impressed upon the rest of the country. Not until she wrote *The House of Mirth*, which pictured New York society as being composed almost entirely of fools and rotters, did Mrs. Wharton become a really popular novelist. One of our most gifted writers, whose fine artistry has been extolled so often there can be little excuse for dwelling upon it here, her pen-pictures of America and the Americans, take them altogether, can scarcely be described as flattering. *The Age of Innocence* pictures a society hidebound, complacent, with little real culture; the semi-social, semi-literary group by which the hero of *Hudson River Bracketted* presently found himself surrounded had little distinction and less honesty; the heroine of the recently published *Her Son* is a woman of almost incredible stupidity, and though the narrator is a kindly soul he hasn't wit enough to see the truth until it has long been apparent to even the dullest of readers. Mrs. Wharton's innumerable imitators, being quite unable to paint the many delicate shades of gray she so deftly blends, darken her pastel tints into crimson and black, with results occasionally ludicrous and frequently repellant.

Startlingly unlike the wealthy, leisured New York of Mrs. Wharton and her followers is the city sketched by some of our younger novelists. Few of them present it so charmingly as does Robert Nathan in his wistful half-satire, half-fantasy, *One More Spring*, a book whose incidents are sometimes unreal as those of any fairy-tale (for the heroes and heroines of fairy-tales, you must remember, usually have plenty of troubles of their own before the happy ending is reached) yet which in atmosphere and spirit is pathetically true to this period of the depression. More often is New York drawn in the fashion so vigorously used by Albert Halper for his interesting *Union Square*. Here we have a New York in no way admirable, a place of stupidity and squalor and intellectual pretense mingled with debauchery and brutality. The police of Mr. Halper's New York delight in clubbing and in riding down those poor half-baked fools, the Communists, and even the members of the Fire Department, men whose devotion and courage scarcely a single New Yorker has ever refused to admit and to praise, are shown as arriving at the fire too late to be of much use and far more

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prompt at playing the hose on the morons the police have incited to riot. The majority of the characters have few if any brains, and the man supposed to be abundantly endowed therewith takes care to drown them in drink. It is of course quite true that there are plenty of fools, drunkards, poseurs and prostitutes in and around Union Square, but there are a good many decent and even fairly intelligent people as well. Jones exaggerates; of this fact there is "no possible, probable shadow of doubt"; but why insist that he is an unmitigated liar?

As for the extreme East, its experience with the novelists has been very like that of the Middle West, save that it began so long ago and has become so deeply embedded in our minds that we are inclined to take it more or less as a matter of course. The priggish, chilly, ancestor-worshiping city-dwellers, the back-biting, narrow-minded villagers, alike permeated through and through with all the unpleasant traits we sum up in the word puritanical; the taciturn, hard-fisted, hard-hearted, penurious and frequently hypocritical male, the thin-lipped, narrow-minded, narrow-chested and acidulous female, living in the smallest of mental and moral ruts, practically impervious to anything like pity, tenderness or beauty, are types which have become so thoroughly established that the very mention of New England brings them to mind. Historians and biographers, or at any rate a good many of them, have made some effort to soften the popular impression and convince readers that though Jones may have been an exaggerator and even a bit of a falsifier, he didn't lie all the time and about everything. But the effects these have been able to produce are but weak when compared with those achieved by novelists, from the days of *The Scarlet Letter* down to the present time, when it has become the fashion to depict and more or less deplore the fact that the once sturdy and in many ways quite admirable native New England stock is being ousted by foreigners. Even the Dr. George Bull of James Gould Cozzens's excellent novel, *The Last Adam*, laments the changes which have come over the little town of New Winton, and declares that Connecticut is rapidly going down to destruction.

This same Dr. Bull also deplores the lack of "real men" in New Winton, an affliction in which, to judge from recent fiction, it is by no means singular. Save for those novels which deal with America's past, it is difficult to find in present-day American fiction a single man you would be willing to have for a friend. As for the typical American woman she is, Heaven help us! avowedly presented in Sinclair Lewis's *Ann Vickers*. And what sort of person is she? Well, to begin with, she wants to be sexually free, so while still fairly young, though quite old enough to know her way about, she lives with an obviously poor speciman of a man. There is no apparent reason why the two shouldn't marry, save that this would not suit the author's plans. Presently, Ann learns that she is to have a child, and a little later discovers that its father, from whom the War had temporarily separated her, has no intention of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

marrying her. However, he declares that he supposes he must when he is told of her condition. But Ann, having enjoyed her "freedom," is unwilling to pay the price, either by taking a reluctant husband she now despises, or by caring for her child herself and enduring social opprobrium. She reveals her plight to an accommodating female physician, who releases her by means of an illegal operation. Later, Ann again falls in love, as she calls it, and when she discovers she can't get the man she wants, promptly marries the man she can get; a man she, now a woman in the late thirties or more, has known for years. He is a fool; no more of a fool after marriage than before, but Ann now finds his silliness exasperating. So she becomes the mistress, immediately after their first meeting, of the only man who shows any willingness to have her. As this individual is already married, she induces her husband to father her illegitimate child, only to take the boy away as soon as the poor wretch has had time to become fond of him and to try to convince himself that the baby is his own son, a thing physically quite possible. Ann is one of those who manage to eat their cake and have it, no matter who does the paying for it. She is acclaimed as "a great woman." Among the other women characters in the book we find wantons and Lesbians, the most admirable of Ann's friends being murderesses of one kind or another. Two "society" women are introduced, one the ostensibly philanthropic lady already mentioned, whose real interest is in publicity, the other "frigid"; Mr. Lewis apparently shares the not uncommon delusion that no woman can at one and the same time have her name in the *Social Register* and be quite human.

In fact, if we are to take his word for it, all America's really worth while people, her best and most praise-worthy, are locked up in her wicked and inhuman jails. So far as the women of the United States are concerned they, as represented by Ann and her friends, are about on a par with the doctors portrayed in *Arrowsmith*, and the clergy who appear in *Elmer Gantry*. Yet *Ann Vickers* is a "best-seller" all over this country, and has been warmly welcomed in others. Decidedly, we Americans are the victims of the worst sort of an inferiority complex. That other nations should enjoy a tacit acknowledgment of their own superiority over Uncle Sam, is readily understandable.

MODERN biography has passed through a period of disillusionment, in which the main effort has been to draw attention to the feet of clay supporting certain popular idols, often at the cost of disregarding all the rest of their anatomy. It is greatly to be wished that disillusionment of a very different kind might become, for a while at least, fashionable in American fiction. That this is by no means an impossible hope is indicated by the foreshadowing in a few of our recent novels of a new, more genuine type of realism. *One More Spring*, if often fantastic in incident, is nevertheless true in spirit to the New York we have learned to know during these days of the depression, a New York in which there is much of kindness and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

honesty and simplicity, despite certain financial iniquities. *The Last Adam* shows men and women who, New Englanders though they are, are none the less genuine human beings, neither saints nor fiends. Dr. Bull's negligence helped to bring about the epidemic, but it was negligence of a kind of which most of us are guilty at one time or another, and when the illness came, he did not spare himself. Mrs. Banning, his enemy, was in the main a just and kindly and charitable woman, who honestly believed she was doing well to fight him. *The Sheltered Life*, as drawn by the always well-balanced Ellen Glasgow, is another in which real people have their being. *South Moon Under* leaves its reader with understanding, admiration and sympathy for those people of the Florida scrub whose difficult lives it so graphically portrays.

Some one of these days, it may be that the conventions of business banality, Middle Western dreariness, New York rhinestonitis and others of the trite, exaggerated acceptances which are helping, not only to justify foreign nations in a conviction of their own intellectual superiority, but to alienate the different sections of the United States from one another through mistaken beliefs and misunderstandings will be, if not entirely destroyed, at least shown for the misinterpretations, the overemphasized and distorted portrayals they really are. No section of the country is perfect; far from it. Each has its faults as well as its virtues. But why dwell continually on the one, while all but ignoring the other?

Nobody can or will deny for a moment that Jones exaggerates, sometimes even prevaricates. He isn't a model of perfect truthfulness, not by any manner of means; but neither, when all is said, is he a damned liar!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Red Light Turns to Green

By Henry F. Woods, Jr.

An almost forgotten problem solves itself

In those remote days of the boom our jaded populace looked upon an automobile ride as a bit of a bore. To the driver it was at times almost terrifying. Everywhere he went it seemed as if the entire output of the Ford and General Motors plants for the years 1926 to 1929 were parading in front of him. Roads were neither wide enough nor numerous enough. Traffic cops had forgotten what politeness, if any, they had learned in their youth. Motorists themselves were apt to curse a fellow motorist for doing no more than keeping to his own side of the road and traveling along at a moderate pace.

But things are different now: driving is a pleasure. The motorist is human once more. Gasoline is cheap, and so are tires. Automobiles last longer and run more smoothly than ever before.

And the traffic! It seems to have disappeared into thin air. Gone are the long, long lines of motor cars. Absent are the honking maniacs of the highway. Departed are the stern policemen bent on holding back the progress of traffic. Automobiles are moving as they were meant to move. The dreaded and nerve-racking bottle-neck has become a plaza or a clover-leaf. The narrow road has grown up into a wide highway. The dangerous intersection is now either below or above the point it used to be. For the first time in the history of the automobile we have caught up with our traffic problem.

For twenty-five years automobile registrations in this country mounted in numbers each year without a single interruption. Registrations of motor vehicles multiplied from 78,000 in 1905 to more than 26,500,000 in 1929. While this tremendous growth was taking place, every city, village, county and State, as well as the Federal Government itself, was making a Herculean effort to provide facilities for the automobile.

When the first automobiles made their appearance our roads were famous principally for the scenic splendor of the country they traversed in the West; for their adhesive qualities in the South and for the quaint covered bridges they brought one to in old New England. They were admirably suited to travel by horseback and in certain localities scattered here and there were sufficiently well-constructed to permit a man in a surrey to drive five miles in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one afternoon, provided the surrey was drawn by a fast horse. But by no stretch of the imagination were these roads adapted to the motor car. They were an outgrowth of old Indian trails, followed by the furrows of wagon trains or the routes of stages. They were not in any sense a planned system of highways.

Had this country been a little principality in the Balkans or a cluster of islands in the Caribbean, providing roads for the automobile would not have been much of a job. But here we were up against a different problem. We had mountains to overcome. We had lowlands. We had some tropic States where the summer was made bearable by rainfalls of diluvial proportions. In other sections we had great swamps to bridge, mighty rivers to cross. Up north our roads had to be built in a land where snow covered the ground for a good part of the year. Due to climate, topography and various physical factors, building a network of highways in the United States was a Gargantuan task.

For years all we could possibly do was to attempt to keep up with the terrific pace the automobile set. Considering the obstacles in the way, we did well. Our first job was to surface as many thousands of miles of roads as possible. We concentrated on that, in cities and in the rural sections. Every time we patted ourselves on the back in the belief that we were catching up with the automobile, the number in use would take a mighty jump upward.

It was a seemingly hopeless task. As the number of automobiles grew, so did the temper of the motorist. The automobile became faster and more powerful. The mania for speed followed the mechanical development of the motor car and the post-War urge to go somewhere and go there fast animated the man behind the wheel. On the other side of the fence were the non-motorists and the police and traffic authorities. The motorist wanted to go his way without interruption and with as much rapidity as possible. The traffic authorities, in the manner of all persons to whom policing powers are delegated, took a decidedly negative viewpoint of motor cars. They thought that it was their job to stop the automobile, to put in its way as many obstructions as possible, to make it give way to pedestrians at any and all times. Their attitude toward the movement of motor vehicles was essentially inhibitory.

This served to multiply congestion. First we had fast cars manned by persons who desired to drive these cars rapidly. To this was added the difficulties imposed by narrow roads, unpaved roads, poorly paved roads, awkward turns, narrow bridges, intersections, railway grade crossings and a number of physical hindrances, such as parked cars, slow-moving trucks and trolleys which stopped at every block.

By 1929 the traffic problem was at its worst. Almost 25,000,000 motor cars were registered and in use. Every one was in a hurry in keeping with the tempo of the times. Drivers were high-strung, excited and excitable. Traffic authorities burned the midnight oil in efforts to devise new routes, to do anything to make traffic more fluid. In the meantime, construction of highways and roads

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was being rushed, streets were being widened, parking restrictions were being placed in effect.

Traffic was a problem not alone because it inconvenienced individual motorists. That was the least of it. It was an economic problem. Congestion delayed the transportation of merchandise. The trucking and haulage costs of industries were mounting, because of delays encountered along streets and highways. Congestion was causing accidents, which are always costly. It was having a psychological and even a physiological effect on our people. It was making us a nation of neurasthenics and neurotics, according to some of our more easily worried authorities on the state of the public health. Fifth Avenue in New York and Michigan Avenue in Chicago on a hot summer's afternoon were covered by poison-laden palls of exhaust gases raised by automobiles caught in traffic jams. And every time we provided facilities for three extra cars, four additional automobiles were placed in use.

Automobile production had mounted until in 1929 our factories turned out 5,621,715 motor cars, where ten years previously they had rejoiced at the prosperity which a production of slightly less than two million units had brought the industry. In one year more than five and a half million additional motor cars were placed on our highways and streets to add to a congested condition which was already appalling. Worse still, cars were being so well made they lasted longer. Consequently, the old cars were not being junked as rapidly as in days gone by.

At this point the situation looked, if not hopeless, at least decidedly gloomy. Driving on a Sunday afternoon was no longer a pleasure. Touring was satisfactory only if one left at dawn on Saturday morning and made sure to arrive home early Sunday afternoon. Sunday evenings were a nightmare to millions of motorists who were caught in long lines of slowly moving cars — lines which often moved only a mile an hour. The automobile people were afraid that people might stop buying cars because the congestion prevented them from using them freely. But all they could do was hope that we would sooner or later catch up with and pass the problem. Our road-building programmes were already enormous. In the Government's fiscal year 1929, it paid to the States $80,000,000 for road aid. In 1929, 54,895 miles of rural roads were surfaced and almost a billion and a half dollars were expended on rural road improvement projects alone.

And then one autumn day there was a crash of security values in that narrow canyon that extends from Broadway to the East River. It reverberated around the world. Unknown to motordom, it was the silver lining of the traffic cloud, the beginning of the end of our traffic troubles. It marked the onset of a depression which, however calamitous in other respects, was to give us a breathing spell, a much-needed chance to get abreast of our traffic problem. At last we had the opportunity to pierce the gloom which confronted a nation of motoring enthusiasts whose enthusiasm was being rapidly dissipated by their

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own great numbers and by their own inability to use to the fullest extent the motor cars they had purchased.

Almost four years have passed since the frenzied days of the market collapse. The automobile industry has not been spared difficulties, but, in a sense the depression has been a blessing to it, even though it might be difficult to convince a motor magnate of the truth of this statement.

Let's look again at the statistics. In 1929 we saw that the country had more than 26,500,000 motor vehicles registered. At the end of 1930 this number had been increased by only .16 per cent, or 43,838, and the number of passenger cars in use actually decreased by 62,327, the first decrease since the automobile was introduced in this country. By 1931, the number of motor cars had decreased from the 1929 peak to 25,814,103 and at the end of last year had decreased still further to 24,373,979.

Significant as are the statistics, they tell but a fraction of the story. They point, first, to a substantial decrease in the number of motor cars in use, and second to a continuation of the road-building and road-improvement programmes carried on in various sections of the country. For example, in the current fiscal year (1932) which ends on June 30, the Federal Government will have made available to the States the sum of $226,000,000 for road aid, as compared with $133,340,910 in 1931 and $75,880,863 for 1930. In 1932 sufficient road-building was done to bring the total of surfaced roads in this country to 868,000 miles from the 730,000 miles in use at the end of 1931. At the beginning of the year our total highway mileage was 3,055,000, compared to 3,024,083 at the start of 1932.

Since the halcyon days of plenty, we have developed not only greater physical facilities for the automobile, but, what some traffic authorities consider even more important, we have awakened to a new consciousness of traffic. We have adopted a radically different philosophy of traffic control. We are more charitably inclined in our opinion of the motorist and of his modern Juggernaut.

We have seen — and most of us have occasion to recall examples of it — that the regulation of traffic was primarily negative. Make the motorist stop. Keep his speed down. Restrict his movements. Put the entire burden on him. That was the underlying thought behind the control of traffic in the old days. But not so today.

The symbol of the new order is the traffic cop at a busy intersection, motioning the stream of automobiles on, just as this same autocrat of the highway once symbolized the old order of things when he stood majestically at his crossing with upraised hand and with the power of the law behind him ordered traffic to stop. On every hand we see evidence of this thought. We have passed almost completely out of the red light, restrictive era of traffic control. The green light has flashed.

We have only to look at what a few of our large cities have done in recent years to obtain satisfactory proof of this. New York's case is probably the most outstanding. Sev-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eral years ago the dandified Grover Whalen, once New York's official host to celebrities, assumed the position of Commissioner of Police. The city was suffering from a chronic crime wave against which the press and the various civic bodies and the more intelligent citizens were up in arms. Whalen proceeded at once to drag a red herring across the trail by pushing crime off the front pages. He did this by substituting an interest in traffic for interest in crime.

An honest endeavor to control crime might possibly have had political repercussions. But traffic control was a safe subject. Not even a Tammany politician could object to any plan that would better traffic conditions. Whalen, a showman, was able to dramatize traffic, to make its control spectacular, interesting. He started with the theatrical district. He abolished parking in a specified area, prohibited all turns, made pedestrians obey the lights and made it clear to his officers that their job was to keep traffic moving as rapidly as it could move consistently with safety. Where taxicab and pleasure cars once made their way through the theatrical district at a snail-like pace, under Whalen's plan they zoomed along. They couldn't go too fast for the police. They were there to see to it that automobiles moved. The Commissioner himself said so. Not only that, but the debonair Mr. Whalen stationed himself at Times Square in a police booth and took personal charge of the area night after night. It was good politics.

But it was more than that. Whalen's action signalized the approach of the new deal in traffic control. It marked the first time a police department in a major city had seriously attempted the acceleration of traffic. Whalen focused the attention of civic authorities, police officials, traffic experts and the press on the possibilities of expediting the flow of traffic. He led the way. He sowed the seeds and they fell on fertile soil.

As a result there has been a gradual and consistent change in the philosophy underlying the average police authority's conception of vehicular traffic. Under Commissioner Mulrooney, New York's police have nurtured Whalen's seeds. They have retimed the city's traffic lights. Police traffic engineers are at work at hundreds of different points studying traffic frequency and making observations that will help them to determine in various areas the light cycles which will most efficiently move vehicles on their way.

Similar moves have been made in other cities. Philadelphia has worked out a system of progressive traffic lights which permit the motorist to travel uninterruptedly on signalized streets so long as he maintains a fixed speed. Where much of Philadelphia's traffic was formerly half-paralyzed, it now flows with a pleasing freedom. In Chicago, police are working on a synchronized signal system to provide for an uninterrupted flow of traffic on the principal streets. The smaller communities have taken their cue from the larger cities. The crossroads traffic light, which was installed in many cases for political reasons or because of the convincing talk of a clever traffic-light salesman, has been removed, except in those rare cases where the stream of traffic was sufficiently

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heavy to merit its continuance. The "speed-trap" once used so successfully to lure victims to pay money into the town coffers is also a relic of a by-gone motoring age. Even the detour is passing from the scene.

THE small communities have learned much about traffic, its virtues and its disadvantages. In the early days of road-building, the village fathers usually insisted that the new highway go through the heart of their community. This was the price of their support for road-building projects. They believed that good roads would bring trade; that new business, new population and boom times followed after new highways. It was considered an honor and a civic and economic advantage for Bumpkintown to be on the main highway. In the early days, such highways did have a beneficial economic effect upon the communities through which they passed.

The current habits of motorists have wrought a change. Today motor cars seldom tarry any longer than necessary in the towns through which their journey takes them. But they do pass through in sufficient numbers to cause or add to local traffic congestion. Instead of bringing trade, they frequently bar it. Motorists who live in the surrounding country often pick the towns off the main highways for their shopping, because of their decreased congestion and inconvenience.

So today we witness the small communities urging highways which skirt their town. These by-pass roads, as they are called, have become popular. They usually parallel the communities along their routes with small "feeder" roads or streets leading directly to the town. This permits the free movement of traffic. It is now possible for motorists on many stretches of excellent highway in various parts of the country to travel at high speed for twenty or thirty miles without going through a single town or community. Yet if they do desire to stop at any town along these routes, they have only to turn off and drive a mile or less to the right or left.

Roads are no longer built in a slipshod way, employing the shortest distance between two points or passing through communities or sections of counties to please politicians, influential landowners or local civic or commercial bodies. Today the finest engineering brains in the country go into the planning of many of our road-building projects. Modern highways are constructed with a view to their practicability and safety. They are laid out to avoid congested areas. They are built in such a manner as to prevent sharp curves and, where possible, dangerous grades. And they are built for speed, with curves banked, intersections bridged or tunneled and with every consideration of the motorist's comfort, safety and convenience.

The past few years have also witnessed as an adjunct of the highway a new development — the vehicular tunnel. New York and New Jersey are now connected by the famous Holland Tunnel which is used by millions of motorists every year. It permits an automobile to cover the distance between the two States in a fraction of the time required when ferries were the only means of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crossing the Hudson at New York City. Detroit now has a new vehicular tunnel to connect it with Windsor, Ontario.

But the bridge is not yet a thing of the past. New bridges rear themselves majestically over many of our most important rivers. They help to shorten distance and to expedite traffic. New York and New Jersey are now connected by the famous George Washington Bridge. Memphis has a new bridge across the Mississippi. The Father of Waters is also crossed by new bridges at New Orleans and at St. Paul and Minneapolis. On the West Coast San Francisco Bay will be bridged in a few years. In thousands of counties new wide bridges are being or have been built to accommodate the vehicular traffic across various bodies of water. They have replaced the picturesque but deterring wooden bridges whose flooring still carries the dents of millions of horse-shoes as a memento of the age of the horse and buggy.

Our traffic relief has not come entirely from gigantic and impressive highway-building projects. They serve only to speed traffic over large distances. They are important and spectacular. They have made driving a real pleasure and have helped immensely to bring the pleasures of the country to the city dweller and to promote cross-country motoring. But the very purpose of these roads would have been defeated had not our urban communities taken steps to provide more adequate city traffic facilities.

THE cities, too, have awakened to their responsibilities. They have become conscious of the fact that a wide State highway should be complemented by wide and adequate city streets, if it is to reach its maximum efficiency. On every hand the motorist may see for himself evidences of the city's attempts to provide modern and comprehensive traffic facilities for him.

Philadelphia, Detroit, New York, St. Louis and Chicago — to mention only a few of our larger cities — have completed impressive street widening programmes in the past few years. In one year alone Chicago widened forty miles of streets from two lanes to four lanes.

As the new era for motorists dawns, we find that many sections already have such splendid systems of primary highways built and in use that they can now afford to start work on their secondary system of roads. This is true in Illinois, for instance. In California the State has embarked on a programme which calls for realigning and reconstructing existing roads. Ultimately it is planned to remove dangerous turns and the various physical factors which tend to slow up the movement of traffic. Sharp curves, bottle-necks, and dangerous grades throughout the State are yielding to the skill and persistence of the highway engineer.

In New York State, Long Island, with its popular crowd-attracting beach resorts on either shore and its proximity to populous metropolitan New York, is undergoing a highway metamorphosis. The Southern State Parkway and the road to Jones Beach on the south shore have already acquired more than a mere local fame among motorists. Both roads permit of the free and rapid

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement of thousands of automobiles each hour. Both are free of dangerous or busy intersections and both skirt villages and towns. The entire island is now being benefited by widened roads and by numerous new highway projects. In a few years it should be as easy and pleasant to drive on this island as it is to drive in the remote and uncongested areas of the Far West. But for many years the mere mention of Long Island traffic sent chills up and down the spines of even the more venturesome automobile enthusiasts.

The importance of this tremendous freeing of pent-up streams of motor cars is more than might seem apparent at first glance. It has several significances. First, it promotes convenience, it makes motor travel more comfortable, more rapid and more enjoyable. Then it has an economic significance, in that the more enjoyable and the more pleasant motoring is, the better the market for automobiles. Moreover, the greater mileage of good roads assures a more frequent use of the motor car, the consumption of additional oil and gasoline and the more rapid wear and replacement of the automobile. Social changes are also bound to follow on the heels of traffic relief. The automobile has moved the suburbs nearer to the city. The relief of congestion will do much to build up suburban population. It may even have a pronounced effect on decentralizing our population.

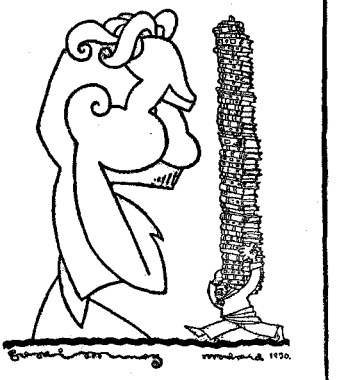
Traffic relief has not come to us suddenly, though it may seem so. We have been working toward that end for years. It may have been only a coincidence that the depression came along just as many of our major highway and traffic improvement projects were about to crystallize. In any event, we may hail the new era. We may be assured that today, when we have one automobile for every six persons, traffic will never again grow to the stage at which the motor car multiplies faster than our ability to provide it facilities. The red light has changed to green.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE

by

HERSCHEL BRICKELL



PERHAPS the most obvious fact about the Great Depression is that people whose lives are lived close to the eternal realities are better off than people who have been caught up in the false values of what passed for civilization during the dead and gone boom period. Farm and village folk felt the effects of the Ford Era, and spent money they did not have and could not make, for automobiles, electric refrigerators, radios and whatever other products of the Industrial Age they saw and were sold, but when the crash came they swung back to pioneer conditions with an ease that could not be matched by the city dweller, a helpless cog in a machine over which he had no control. The Landscaper has just had a stay of several weeks in one of the many small towns of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, that fabulously rich territory of generous living and free spending, where cotton has always ruled supreme, and never failed in the long run to break the people who gambled with its fascinating and desperately uncertain gyrations. It was once a rich village, bursting with business and civic pride, the latter leading in the boom period to the erection of a court house at a cost of $200,000, and the paving of the entire town.

The Debt Remains

THE souvenirs of this period of free spending remain in the form of taxes so high that thousands of acres of land have passed into the possession of the State, and this year with the added handicap of another flood, property owners are in many cases not even attempting to pay their taxes. They have three years in which to redeem property sold under the hammer — in most cases there are no purchasers, anyway — and more than one said to the Landscaper: "Certainly we are letting our property be sold for taxes. If we can reclaim it in three years, well and good; if not, we are no worse off, and for the present at least we have the use of what small amount of money is left to us." What kind of situation this creates for the county can easily be imagined, but nobody has found any other solution. Economies have been put into effect right and left, but the bonded indebtedness remains unchanged, and land taxed for three dollars an acre could not be sold for fifteen cents, could not, indeed, be sold for any price.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Brighter Side

THIS is the darker side of the picture. The brighter side lies in the ability of village folk to get their living from the land whenever it becomes necessary. The usual Delta system of farming has been based upon cotton production to the exclusion of everything else, and year after year Delta farmers have fed their mules on corn shipped in from the Middle West, paying out cash for foodstuffs of every variety. But when the pinch comes, as it has come since the great flood of 1927, the way to subsistence farming is wide open. There is plenty of land in the town, for building lots are of a generous size, ample for cows and chickens, an orchard, a garden, and whatever else that is needed to supply the table. Money quickly disappears from the picture; the Landscaper talked to one young fellow who had always had, and deserved, good jobs before the depression, who said his earnings at present frequently ran as low as two dollars a week, but he added that he and his family of a wife and two children had yet to miss a meal. In addition to the appurtenances mentioned above, he has fourteen hives of bees, bought for five dollars. His business allows him to barter, and so his pantry is filled with home-cured hams and shoulders, home-ground meal, preserves and canned vegetables.

Back to Kerosene Lamps

IN COMMON with many other residents of the town, he has not been able to pay his electric light bill for several months, and so has gone back to kerosene lamps. In front of his house last week, a bayou was filling rapidly with flood waters, so he paused one morning long enough to say: "Well, they tell me my city water will be cut off this week, but if the river keeps on rising it won't bother me at all, because I can dip all I need off the front gallery." This man, and there are many more like him, feels more keenly than anything else the lack of books and magazines to read; a few years ago he averaged $100 a year or more for the purchase of new books alone, and now he would have to work hard a week to buy a current novel. But his family is well fed and in no danger of suffering, and even if the water comes into his house, as it did last year, he has enough initiative and ingenuity to beat the game somehow. In fact, he is already thinking of selling fish, but not very seriously, because everybody else will be in as good a position as he is in respect of the raw material. . . .

And No More Fords

HE IS one of hundreds of thousands of small-town and rural Americans who are close enough to the pioneer tradition to be able to adapt themselves readily to any conditions; neither their courage nor their ability to take care of themselves has been sapped by years of working for other people and depending upon pay envelopes. His wealthy neighbor is following the same course, having lost what he had in real estate or banks or investments, and this, of course, eases the social pressure. Clothes are no longer a consideration, and the possession of an automobile is looked upon as rank extravagance; with few exceptions the cars that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remain are used only for business purposes, and the riding for the sake of riding that went on a few years ago has almost disappeared. There are, for example, fifteen filling stations in the town, all of which were once doing some business, whereas today it is doubtful if one of the lot is making anything.

Saturdays the streets of the town are crowded with Negroes from the near-by plantations, as always. Most of them come to look and to see each other; their slender "furnish" for the making of crops leaves them little to spend except for the barest necessaries, although they still manage to find money for phonograph records. And, it should be added, for beauty preparations. There is no such thing as a kinky head among the women, young or old, and the young use face powder, lipstick and rouge, with a generosity they have borrowed from their white fellow-citizens, whom they imitate in dress and manner with the mimetic instinct that is so strong a characteristic of the race.

Just Another Problem

THIS sketch might go on indefinitely, for there are books and books to be written about such towns. In fact, one of the Landscaper's prayers for years has been that some one would do a really first-rate novel about an American small town. There is something to be said about the flood; the town referred to in the foregoing paragraphs had never had any high water, except during the rare times of the great overflows, until last year. Now it is partly under again, and there are threats of an inundation equal to that of 1932. This situation has been brought about by the stupid bungling of the flood control situation throughout the delta of the Yazoo River and its tributaries, a piecemeal botch of new drainage ditches and levees that has caused the flooding of thousands of acres of good lands without relieving conditions in the slightest. The main levee system of the Mississippi has been so strengthened since the flood of 1927 that it seems reasonably safe, but this is only one step toward the solution of one of the nation's greatest problems. What will finally be done nobody is wise enough to say, but if President Roosevelt can find time from his efforts to save the country to see this situation, he will have no difficulty in discovering jobs for several hundred capable engineers and a good many thousand laborers. It is, of course, a Federal problem, for local self-interest renders any other attack futile from the outset.

They Can "Take It"

IT IS impossible to live with people of the kind mentioned without admiring their fine courage and self-reliance, their "intestinal stamina," a quality that was being sapped from the whole American race with every hour of the kind of conditions we witnessed between 1921 and 1929. Away back in the woods the Landscaper came across one of this breed, a one-armed man well past middle age, whose home could be reached only by a two-mile trip in a boat because of the high water. Two months ago, his mule died. He bought a horse and colt to finish his spring plowing, and the day before the visit the seller had come to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reclaim his property because it had not been paid for. He sat on the gallery of his cabin telling the story of his hard luck with as much dry humor as a Will Rogers, pausing occasionally in the recital to swear loudly and vigorously against people who took help from relief organizations. He'd be so-and-soed if he'd ever take a penny from any so-and-so Red Cross or the Government; any man who couldn't make a living in the Delta blankety-blank well deserved to starve to death. A couple of years ago the hero of this tale tried to whip a man almost twice his size, in spite of the handicap of a lost arm. The larger man knocked him in the head with a crowbar, fracturing his skull, and in two weeks he was out of the hospital and plowing. . . . Tough people, these; they know how to take it and grin. It is a pity some of the city folk who have moaned and groaned over the loss of some small fraction of their millions could not see what real men look and act like.

Beer in Mississippi

In a moment, the Landscaper will step into his proper part and have something to say about recent books. Only one more story about life. . . . Here in Mississippi sentiment for Prohibition has always been powerful, although Mississippi "corn" has always been abundant, and was never more plentiful or as cheap as it is now. There has been considerable agitation over the beer question, mainly, one supposes, because not everybody in the State can afford to buy gasoline enough to make the Louisiana line, and a short time ago Ex-Governor Bilbo was asked his opinion of the situation. He knows his Mississippians, this man Bilbo, whatever else may be said of him, and his answer was: "We'll never have beer in this State as long as its citizens can stagger to the polls to vote against it."

Now for literature. A good many exciting books have passed this way recently, including one of the finest American biographies the Landscaper has ever had the good fortune to read. This is Marquis James's *Andrew Jackson: The Border Captain* (Bobbs-Merrill, $3.75), a wholly fresh interpretation of as picturesque a figure as this country has produced. Mr. James, whose excellent life of Sam Houston, *The Raven*, won — and deserved — the Pulitzer Prize a short time ago, makes Jackson out anything else but the frontier ruffian he has often been depicted. He declares that, to the contrary, Jackson belonged very definitely to what aristocracy there was in the pioneer country where he grew up, and that he clung fast to the ideals of his birth and breeding. There is much new material in the volume, a good part of it derived from 1,200 freshly discovered letters.

A Valuable Contribution

Mr. James had a story full of drama to work with and he has presented his material with skill and insight. Many of the controversies that have raged about Jackson are cleared up, and a magnificent picture of the period has been painted. This is a book that any one should find good reading, whether there be any particular interest in Jackson to start with or not; a fine and scholarly contribution to the story of this country that is at the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

same time a splendid portrait of a great man.

Another recent biography that will have a strong appeal to all lovers of Sidney Lanier is Aubrey Harrison Starke's *Sidney Lanier: A Biographical and Critical Study* (University of North Carolina Press, $5). Mr. Starke has written an exhaustive and fully detailed study, using methods that are admirably thorough. The difficulty about the volume from the point of view of the general reader is that its very merits stand in the way of any wide public interest. Lanier's career was pathetically short, since he died at the age of thirty-nine, and his literary work was done under conditions of the greatest difficulty, since he fought an unceasing fight against poverty and tuberculosis. It was a brave and inspiring struggle, however, and his accomplishment in the face of the handicaps he faced was really extraordinary. Mr. Starke has furnished us with a complete and detailed study of all his work, much of it, unfortunately, unfinished and relatively unimportant. What is needed, however, as Professor Mims suggested some time ago in his excellent biography of Lanier, is a soundly edited one-volume selection of prose and poetry, with a biographical sketch. It could be of high quality, and might go a long way toward winning for Lanier some of the recognition that has up to now been denied him. Whatever his faults, he and Whitman were unquestionably the only two poets of importance, with the possible exception of Emily Dickinson, this country had produced up to the present generation, and it is a real pity that his best work is not better known.

Sinclair and the Bankers

ANOTHER biography of an entirely different order is *Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox*, published by Mr. Sinclair himself at a price of $3. This tremendously exciting book tells the tale of the career of Fox, who, starting with $1,600, came in time to control something like a half-billion dollars, and who was eventually wrecked, or so declares Mr. Sinclair, with all the evidence on his side, by a conspiracy of bankers. Mr. Fox told Mr. Sinclair the story, and furnished him with the documents to substantiate his statements. The narrative is a complete exposure of the banking methods of the United States, naming names and furnishing facts. It is, of course, Mr. Sinclair's meat, and no one can pick up the book without feeling the delight with which it was written. The Landscaper's own feeling is that this is one of the finest pieces of work Mr. Sinclair has ever done, and a volume that ought to be read by every American who has lost money through the stupidity or skullduggery, or both, of the bankers. Indeed, one hopes that it will not fail to reach the White House; it might serve to guide President Roosevelt and his advisers in formulating plans for the future protection of the public. It is "hot stuff," and will bring the blushes, if bankers can blush.

What's Wrong with Banking

MR. FOX's own comment upon the banking situation in general is apt and intelligent enough to merit quotation. He goes to the core of the matter in these paragraphs:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bankers then changed, and had a different purpose in life. They were not contented with earning the normal profits that a bank could earn on its capital and surplus. There sprang up what I consider the greatest evil in the financial world, and one of the causes of this great depression, even more than short selling. In these banks, which were supervised by the banking department, and whose accounts were carefully audited, there was found a subterfuge that would permit them to do things for which their charter was never intended; there came the fashion of creating an affiliate to the bank, called a securities company. This, in my opinion, is nothing more than a gambling scheme to use the funds of depositors for speculation. . . . The honest banker of thirty years ago has become a stock manipulator, using the funds of his bank to participate in various syndicates as they are offered to him.

A Little Honesty, Please

MR. SINCLAIR'S thesis is the complete control of American industry by the bankers, the billion-dollar boys, and he develops it in a way that will make many a reader grab a shovel and deposit what he has left in a hole in the backyard. This is not meant to indicate that the book is exaggerated or unduly alarming; it merely tells the truth about the American banking system and the men who run it, and there isn't a word in it that would inspire confidence in anybody except an imbecile. The truth is, however, that no change of system such as Mr. Sinclair, with his hatred of capitalism would like to see, can make any difference so long as common honesty is as rare as it is in the United States today, and this quality is, unfortunately, as lacking in the little fellow as the big one. Talk of punishing the big bankers is exactly of a piece with talk of hanging the Kaiser after the War. The fabric of this country was rotten with graft and dishonesty before the crash, and still is, for that matter, although stealing is a little more difficult and much more unpopular than it was during the boom.

War and Preparedness

IN THE field of general literature, another book that will cause the thinking sleepless nights is *Inevitable War* by Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Stockton (Perth Publishing Company, $7.50), which is a reserve officer's logical and clearly reasoned attempt to show that all efforts to avert wars are doomed to failure and that preparedness is the only insurance against disaster. This book, whatever one may think of the argument, is no mere militaristic treatise, but a careful examination of the evidence and a presentation of the facts of other wars which show how much this country has lost by a failure to keep its fighting forces up to the mark. Colonel Stockton quotes one President after another on the subject, shows what the horrors of the next war are likely to be, and defies the pacifists to show that anything at all has been accomplished by the work of such organizations as the League of Nations since the World War. He has so many cold facts on his side, it would be exceedingly difficult to try to controvert his reasoning; a Europe on the brink of another war at this moment confirms his main argument. This is a thoughtful, intelligent book, and deserves reading; even so ardent a hater of bloodshed as the Landscaper can see the soundness of the Colonel's arguments and the validity of his case.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No Good Cheer Here

THE *United States in World Affairs* by Walter Lippmann, assisted by William O. Scroggs and Charles Merz (Harper, $3), is an excellent summary of the situation in 1932, capably presented from the point of view of the idealists, who insist upon hoping for better times. Not even this group was able, however, to gain much consolation from observing last year, which left every important world question unsolved, and saw no real progress made in any direction. Perhaps 1933 will have a more cheerful story to tell, but little has happened in the first three months to make any one over-optimistic, despite the remarkable activity that has been shown since the change of administration.

A revised edition of Charles A. and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization*, containing some new material, is now available from Macmillan's at $3.50. At the originally published price of $12.50, this magnificent book was well worth the amount asked. The present depression figure makes it available to many who have not yet read it, and who ought to own it. It is, to the Landscaper's way of thinking, by far the best book of American history. It has been so thoroughly praised by all the oustanding authorities there is little left to say except that if books are to be bought at all in these bitter times, this one should be at the top of the list.

Those who read John Hyde Preston's biography of Mad Anthony Wayne, published a few seasons past, will be interested to know that this sterling young historian has done a book called *Revolution 1776* (Harcourt, Brace, $2.90), which is a biographical story of the War for Independence that is full of life and color. It is the easiest to read of any volume yet published in this period, a real invitation for Americans of this generation to learn something of what happened when the thirteen colonies decided to go it alone. Mr. Preston is no conventional historian; he knows his subject as well as any one, but he breaks with tradition in writing entertainingly. This is a fine book, so good that one hopes it will not be lost because of existing economic conditions.

A Novel of the Frontier

OF RECENT fiction, the Landscaper has thoroughly enjoyed several novels. Merle Colby's second venture into the field of recreating American backgrounds of the past, *New Road* (Viking, $2.50), is delightful. It tells the tale of the beginning of a village in Ohio called Toward, and traces its development from the meeting of a pioneer man and woman in a snowed-under road to the inevitable land speculation and its consequences. The period is from 1830 to the famine and panic of 1837. Mr. Colby is not so strong with his characterization as he is with his backgrounds, and the book has other weaknesses, but it is good reading, nevertheless. *The Coloured Dome* by Francis Stuart (Macmillan, $2), author of *Pigeon Irish*, is a story of Dublin and its inhabitants written by a novelist who possesses keen powers of observation and a fine style. It is as good a book in most respects as its predecessor, and this is high praise.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Other good novels of recent weeks include Gladys Hasty Carroll's *As the Earth Turns* (Macmillan, $2), the story of a New England farm and its people with much of the country wisdom and savor of the best books of this type; and *The Street of the Shoemakers* by Nils Petersen (Macmillan, $2.50), the tale of Rome in the days of Marcus Aurelius. The author is a young Dane, and this is his first book. It is handicapped by a stilted and awkward translation, and is not without its faults, but it has the advantage of bringing a period to life and peopling it with everyday human beings.

Other Good Books

Of books of a general nature, the Landscaper cordially recommends *Mike Fink* by Walter Blair and Franklin J. Meine (Holt, $3), a splendid narrative of the exploits of the Mississippi River hell-roarer, twin-brother to Paul Bunyan in the gallery of American myths; and *Grain Race* by Alan Villiers (Scribner, $3), another of Mr. Villiers's splendid books about the sea and sailing ships, with the best illustrations he has yet published. *Hollow Folk* by Mandel Sherman and Thomas R. Henry (Crowell, $2) is a sociological study of mountain whites in the Blue Ridge, the scientific exploration of one more curious corner of this continent. It is humorless, as might be expected, but amusement is to be derived from it, if one is of an ironical term of mind, for the sociologists discovered that the most backward of the mountain children, living under primitive conditions and with no more hygiene nor morals than rabbits, were often perfectly healthy and well-developed.

A Bit of Romance

Last month, the Landscaper promised the details of the most romantic story he had come upon in recent travels. It goes this way, every word true: A number of years ago a small tug-boat plying on a Southern river regularly carried a pilot and his wife, the cook, past a tumble-down mansion, built just after the Revolutionary War and with grounds running down to the edge of the water. Once the pilot said to his wife: "I'll own that place and you and I will live in it before we die." What she said is not in the record, but she probably told him he was crazy and to keep his eye on bends and currents and let mansions alone. But he eventually gave up piloting and went to Texas, where he got into the carbon black business and made several millions. He returned, bought the mansion, had it perfectly restored, and refurnished, and lived in it for ten years before his death. His widow is there yet; it is one of the most beautiful houses in this part of the South, which means in the world. . . .

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED